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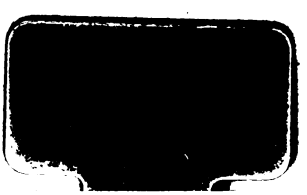

ROMAN STORIES:

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF THE

SEVEN WISE MASTERS

OF

ROME.

CONTAINING

Seven days ENTERTAINMENT, in many pleaſant and witty tales, or ſtories.

WHEREIN

The treachery of evil counſellors is diſcovered, innocency cleared, and the wiſdom of ſeven wiſe philoſophers diſplayed.

Newly corrected, and better explained, and enlarged,

THE THIRTY-THIRD EDITION.

BERWICK:

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PREFACE TO THE READER.

WHEN ignorance, having like a thick and dark cloud, overſpread the eyes and intellectuals of moſt people, men were obliged to draw the rude multitude by ſuch allurements of tales and fables as are contained in this book, to give their attention to good inſtruction, and the wholeſome precepts of morality and virtue; that the fancy being attracted by the familiarity and delightfulneſs of ſuch fabulous ſtories, the ſoul itſelf at the end, by often taſting the ſame nouriſhment, might be inclined to covet knowledge and underſtanding, and might grow quicker ſighted, to behold the hidden and myſtical wiſdom contained in ſuch obſcure riddles.

This being manifeſtly the good deſign of this ſmall volume, we need not make any apology in its behalf. The hiſtory itſelf is both ancient and moral; and is penned in an eaſy and familiar ſtile; and for that reaſon we recommend it as moſt proper to initiate or introduce youth into the principles of ſound literature and virtue, ſince it not only delights the fancy, and attracts the attention; but alſo improves and cheriſhes the ſeeds of virtue in the ſoul, as will appear more largely by the moral, which bears the following ſignification.

The emperor may ſignify the world, who ha-

ving but one ſon (who is man) all his care is to give him good education: But man loſing his own mother, (who is reaſon, or divine grace) and falling into the hand of a ſtep-mother, ſignifying ſin, who is an empreſs of great cunning, and one that commands the world, ſhe ſtudies by all poſſible means the confuſion of man, and would prevail with his weakneſs; but that a ſtar from heaven (by which is meant goodneſs from above, inſtructs man how to avoid the allurements of ſin, by not opening his mouth to bid her welcome: And, the better to prevent her intended miſchief, he hath ſeven wiſe maſters (which are the ſeven liberal ſciences) to inſtruct him: So that being thus armed, man liveth to triumph over ſin, figured in the death of the empreſs and her minion; and in the end, to gain a rich crown of glory and happineſs, which is prepared for all thoſe that in this life labour to attain heaven by doing well.

This is the explanation or moral of the following delightful hiſtory; which, if the reader makes a right uſe of, will be a rich and pleaſant banquet to his ſoul.

And now, notwithſtanding this hiſtory is ſtoried with a variety of pleaſant novels; yet to give a reliſhing taſte of what is in the book, give me leave to inſert in the preface, the following inſtance of the cunning contrivances, and ready wickedneſs of laſcivious women.

A story of an old gentleman that was cuckolded by his young wife.

AN old rich gentleman having married a young wanton lady, and being somewhat wanting in his nocturnal duty, she placed the affection due to him, on a soldier; and although she was careful to conceal her licentious passion, yet the old man being jealous, soon perceived it; but, to be more certain of what he doubted, he pretends a journey for some days, and taking money with him, away he goes.

This lady acquainted an old matron with her amours, who informed the soldier, that it was his good fortune to be beloved by such a lady; which pleased the soldier very well; and now having an opportunity by the old man's absence, he came in the evening to the gate, expecting admittance.

The husband unexpectedly returning home at night, found the soldier at the gate, and suspecting the occasion, his suspician was confirmed when he came into the house, and found a banquet prepared, and his wife ready to receive her champion. She was so surprised at her husband's appearance, that she could not make him any reasonable answer to the many questions he propounded; which so enraged him, that he resolved to be revenged on her; which he thus affects, he strips her naked, and so led her to a pond, in the middle whereof he tied her fast to a post, thinking thereby to cool the heat that had occasioned her malady, and his jealousy.

The soldier, having staid at the gate a long time without admittance, goes to the old matron, and

tells her his fruitleſs attendance. She wonders at it, and goes back with him to the houſe, and having a key, ſhe enters the gate, and leaves the ſoldier in an outer court, went toward the houſe, where ſhe ſaw the young lady in the pond, in the manner her huſband left her.

After a ſhort dialogue, whereby they both underſtood how the ſtate of their affairs ſtood: The young lady having ſtill a mind to enjoy her gallant, it was agreed that the old matron ſhould unſtrip, and ſtand in her ſtead, while ſhe went to her lover. The young lady being dreſſed in the old woman's clothes, went to the ſoldier, who, at firſt took it to be the matron; but being ſoon undeceived, he quickly enjoyed thoſe pleaſures they had ſo much deſired.

The old man who was gone to bed, could not ſleep for thinking of that night's adventure, and believing he was not ſufficiently even with his wife, he reſolves upon a farther revenge, and leaving his bed, goes down to the place where he left his wife, and utters outrageous ſpeeches againſt her, which the old woman, who was there, thought it was beſt not to anſwer, but to remain ſilent; at which he was ſo enraged, that having a knife in his hand, he took her by the noſe, and cut it off, throwing it at her face, wiſhher to preſent it to her lover, and ſo returns to bed.

Soon after, the lady having taken leave of her gallant, returns to the old woman; who though almoſt dead with her wound, gives her an account of her misfortune. She hears the ſtory with admiration, eſteeming herſelf doubly happy, in having enjoyed her friend's love, and eſcaped her

husband's fury; and now she comforts the old woman by promising her a great reward. This pacified her; and the young lady believing that the worst was past, untied the old woman, and again took her place in the water; and having contrived how to manage the matter so as to come off with honour, she thus played her trick.

Believing that her husband was within hearing, as indeed he was, she, with a mournful voice makes a heavy complaint against him, that had so wronged his innocent and chaste wife; and then she implores the assistance of Diana, and all the other goddesses of chastity, to be so gracious to her, as to restore her to her former beauty; which her husband had deprived her of by cutting off her nose.

Having made this complaint and prayer, she continued for some time silent, and then of a sudden, broke out into loud exclamations of joy and thanksgiving to the heavenly powers, for her restoration, calling her husband to come and see this token of her innocence; he being amazed at her discourse, was resolved to know the truth, and rising out of his bed, lighted a candle, went down, and comes to his wife, and beholding her face, finds it whole and sound; whereat standing amazed, he began to detest his rashness, and fear heaven's vengeance; and deprecating the wickedness of his impious fury, he looseth his most chaste wife, and brings her again to his bed; and she by this means recovered both her nose, and the affections of her husband.

Having thus inserted this pleasant novel, as well to give the reader a taste of what is in the

book, as to present him with a notable instance of crafty intrigues of wicked women, we shall never detain the reader no longer, but refer him to the many pleasant novels contained in the book itself, and close this preface, bidding thee heartily

FAREWELL.

HISTORY

OF THE

SEVEN WISE MASTERS OF ROME.

CONTAINING,

Many pleaſant and witty ſtories, very delightful to read.

HISTORY I.

The Emperor of Rome marries the daughter of the king of Lombardy, by whom he has a ſon. The Empreſs falls ſick, makes her requeſt to the Emperor, and dies.

IN the great and flouriſhing city of Rome, reigned a famous emperor, named Pontianus, who took to wife a very beautiful and virtuous lady, only daughter to the king of Lombardy; by whom he had a ſon called Diocleſian. who was not only the hopes of his royal parents, but the whole empire; giving in his childhood great tokens of a wiſe and gracious prince, and improving as in years, ſo in graces of mind and body.

But as fortune is conſtant in nothing but inconſtancy, ſo ſhe gave in a ſhort time, a viſible inſtance of her mutability, and a check to the joys and pleaſures of the emperor and the whole court: For, ſcarce had the young prince attained to the age of ſeven years, when death by a violent fever ſummoned the empreſs to his dark abodes; who, finding no hopes of recovery, addreſſed herſelf to the emperor in the following words:

O my dear lord, ſaid ſhe, I ſhall never recover from this grievous ſickneſs; and therefore as nothing lies ſo much upon my ſpirit, next to the welfare of your majeſty, as that of your young ſon, I have one requeſt to make, which I hope you will not deny. The emperor having promiſed to refuſe her nothing, the dying lady ſaid, I am very ſenſible, my lord, that after my death it will be very convenient, for the good of your dominions to marry again, and as ſtep-mothers do not always prove kind and affectionate to the children that are not their own, I beſeech you that my child may be educated and trained up in all manner of virtuous learning, out of the court, and not under her tuition.

The emperor having promiſed punctually to fulfil her requeſt, the empreſs turning her head, ſoon after expired, leaving the emperor and the whole court under unſpeakable concern and grief, and they mourned for her many days.

HISTORY II.

How the Emperor committed his son to seven wise masters, to be instructed in learning.

AFTER the funeral obsequies of the empress were solemnised, the emperor began to think of performing her request, and to learn his son while he was young, the art to govern himself, that he might be better able to take upon him, after his decease, the government of the empire. In order to this, he assembled the lords of his counsel, to give him their advice in the matter; who unanimously answered, in Rome, my lord, are seven wise masters, famous for their skill in all sorts of learning; let them be sent for and deliver to them your son, to be educated and instructed in arts and sciences.

The emperor approving of their advice, sent a messenger to the seven wise masters, to require them to hasten to his court without delay.

Whereupon they immediately came before the emperor, who said, Sirs, I have but one son, and him I intend to commit to your care, to be instructed in all sorts of literature, so that he may be accomplished, and fit to govern the Roman empire after my decease; for which you shall receive all the encouragement and rewards that you may expect from my royal bounty and favour.

The philosophers gladly undertook the charge, believing that they should gain great reputation, by reason of the majestic and docible spirit that appeared to be in the young prince. And the better to succeed in their endeavours, they made

choice of a place without the city of Rome, pleaſantly ſituated, and adorned with fair fountains, murmuring ſprings, and pleaſant gardens; and every thing ſo commodius and delightful, as rendered a continual harmony night and day.

HISTORY III.

The Emperor, by the advice of the princes and lords of his empire, marries another wife.

THE princes and principal ſenators of his empire, then thought it neceſſary for to perſuade the emperor to a ſecond marriage, that the empire might not be without an heir, in caſe the young prince ſhould die; and upon their humble repreſentations, the emperor condeſcended, and after ſome time, he was married to the daughter of the king of Caſtile, who was reputed to be accompliſhed with all princely endowments.

This new empreſs behaved herſelf ſo well at firſt, that the emperor forgot all the ſorrow he had been under for the death of his firſt wife; and after they had lived ſome years without iſſue, the empreſs hearing that the emperor had a ſon by his former wife, who was fair and beautiful, ſhe fell in love with him, though unſeen, and began to conſider how to have him ſent for home, in order to bring him to her laſcivious appetite.

One night as the emperor lay in his bed, he being more than ordinarily open in declaring the ſecrets of his heart, and his affections to his lady, ſhe took that opportunity to preſs the matter to

him, and desired him, as a mark of his love, not to deny her one favour.

The emperor answered, that he would deny her nothing that was possible for him to perform. Whereupon, the empress said, my dear lord, you know I have no child by you; but my joy is this, you have a son, who is under tutorage of seven wise masters. Him I desire to have as my own son; and to that end, I beseech you to send for him, that I may have the consolation of his presence, and by my respect to him, shew my love for your majesty.

The emperor well pleased with this request, embraced the empress, and replied, I have often had it in my thought to do as you advise me, and it is now sixteen years since I saw him; therefore your will shall be joyfully fulfilled. And the next morning a messenger was accordingly dispatched to the seven wise masters, with orders, that they should bring the prince home at the feast of Pentecost following.

HISTORY IV.

The wise masters consult the stars, to know whether it was proper to obey the Emperor's command.

THE masters having understood the emperor's pleasure, in the evening retired into the garden and taking a view of the heavens, they perceived by one star, that the prince's journey to court would prove fatal; and yet, by another little star, they saw, that if they did not conduct

him to the emperor at the time prefixed, they ſhould loſe their heads.

And as they were ſorrowfully deliberating what was beſt to be done, the young prince came unto them, and demanded the cauſe of their concern; they anſwered, Sir, we have received orders from your father, to conduct you home at the feaſt of Pentecoſt: whereupon, we have conſulted the ſtars and find, that if, at the time prefixed, we do obey the emperor, it will indanger both your life and ours, and yet by another ſtar we ſee, that we ſhall loſe our heads, if we do not obey; then ſaid the prince, let me alſo behold the firmament.

And when he had erected a ſcheme and conſidered the configuration of the planets, and the heavenly aſpects, he told them, that he perceived by a little ſtar, that if he could abſtain from ſpeaking ſeven days, he ſhould ſave his own life and theirs alſo. Now, ſaid the prince, you are ſeven maſters, ſo well accompliſhed in oratory and rhetoric, that it is an eaſy matter for you by your wiſdom to ſave my life for ſeven days, and on the eight I ſhall ſpeak for myſelf, and ſave my life, and yours likewiſe.

The maſters then, by diligent inſpection, perceived their ſcholar was in the right; and admired his wiſdom and knowledge, which was much greater than their own; returning thanks to the Almighty for proſpering their endeavours, which redounded not only to their own honour and advantage, but alſo to the glory and happineſs of the Roman empire.

The maſters then, whoſe names were Poultillias, Lentulus, Craton, Malquedrake, Joſephus, Cleophe, and Solon, reſpectfully undertook each man

his day, to intercede in behalf of the prince, and plead for the preservation of his life, according to his own proposal and request.

HISTORY V.

The Emperor meets his son with great solemnity, pomp and triumph.

THE emperor being informed that his son was upon the road, commanded his princes and nobles to attend upon them in their proper habits and ornaments: And the masters likewise understanding the coming of the emperor, said to the young prince, it is best for us to leave your highness, to go privately into the city, and consult of ways and means how we may act best for your service.

The prince answered only by a nod, signifying, that his dependence was upon providence and in their wisdom in the desperate trial he was to undergo. And so they took their leaves of him, and went a private way to the city, leaving with him his attendants, to pursue his journey towards the court.

And when he was come within sight of the magnificent city of Rome, he espied the emperor attended by all his nobles; whereupon the prince made his obeisance with all manner of respect and duty, but spoke not a word; which the emperor imputing unto bashfulness, having joyfully embraced and welcomed him, ordered him to ride on his right hand, and shewing him the magnificent attendance of princes and noble lords, he asked

his opinion of the grandeur and majeſty of his court and empire, expecting a pertinent anſwer, according to the great wiſdom he was reputed to be endued with.

But the prince remembering the ſilence that he was to keep, to avoid the malignity of the planets, anſwered not one word, which the emperor and nobles admired at, expecting that every word he ſhould ſay would be a ſentence.

The empreſs hearing that the young prince was come, apparelled herſelf very richly, going into the hall with her retinue, ſat down by him, and aſked the emperor, if this was his ſon, that was educated by the ſeven wiſe maſters: He replied, that he was his ſon; but, to his great ſurpriſe he anſwered nothing to all the queſtions he aſked of him.

The empreſs ſaid, that his ſilence muſt be imputed to ſome unaccountable cauſe, the which ſhe would undertake to diſcover and remedy, if that the prince might be permitted to retire with her into ſome private apartment, without any company or attendance.

The emperor little thinking that what the empreſs ſaid, was owing to a lawleſs paſſion; but, on the contrary, believing that ſhe made this propoſal out of good will, preſently commanded the prince to attend upon the empreſs into her own apartment.

HISTORY VI.

The Empreſs ſtrives to enſnare the prince; he rejects all her temptations; ſhe cries out for help, pretending he would have raviſhed her.

THE laſcivious empreſs, without loſing one moment after ſhe was come into her chamber, ſhut the door, and then taking the prince by the hand, ſhe made him ſit down by her on the bed ſide, and ſaid, my beloved prince, I have heard much of your wit and beauty, and now am glad to ſee that which my heart ſo much delights in; it was I that cauſed your father to ſend for you, that I might enjoy you: And now, let me tell you, that for your ſake I have kept my virginity to this day; therefore let us lie down together and enjoy one another.

Theſe, and many other ſuch like enticements, the empreſs uſed; but was not able to move the integrity of the prince, nor provoke him to anſwer one word; whereupon, the empreſs ſaid, why do you not ſpeak to me? O dear prince! thou object of my beſt affection, ſpeak to me: If you have reſolved to be ſilent to all others, methinks you might ſpeak to me. What do you fear? remove all fear, and tell me the cauſe of your ſilence, and let me alone to excuſe you. Speak my dear. Why are you ſo cruel? if you are young, I for my part am in the flower of my age, and if you are fair, there is not a lady in Rome that can equal me for beauty. Why do you not remove your eyes from the ground? look upon me, my prince.

Having ſaid this, ſhe embraced him in a very ardent manner, and ſaid, I beg of you, my dear, to ſpeak at leaſt one word, let it be what it will. Do not deſpiſe me, who am ready to die for you; I loſe my ſpeech; alas, my heart fails me; behold me at your feet implering your love! what ſteel, rock, or marble ſo hard, as would not be ſoftened with theſe intreaties! I, who once thought I could mollify the moſt ſavage and cruel of all the univerſe, muſt now find myſelf ſlighted by you!

The prince remaining ſilent and immoveable, the empreſs brought him pen, ink, and paper, and ſaid, O my dear prince; if you pleaſe not to conſent to me by ſpeech, behold here is pen, ink, and paper, write, and let me know, whether I may hereafter depend upon your love.

Then taking the pen, he wrote as follows:

"O lady, God forbid that I ſhould defile a veſſel conſecrated to my father's uſe; in doing which I ſhould greatly ſin againſt the Almighty, and alſo the malediction of my father: Therefore, from henceforth deſiſt, I beſeech you, from tempting me to ſuch inceſtuous wickedneſs."

When the empreſs had read the writing, filled with rage and maliçe, ſhe tore it with her teeth, rent her clothes and head attire, and ſcratched her face, crying out with a loud voice, Help! help! my lords, help me! leſt this lewd and wicked traitor raviſh me.

HISTORY VII.

The Empress accuses the prince of endeavouring to commit incest with her; he is condemned to death; but respited at the instance of his nobles.

THE emperor being in the hall, and hearing the empress cry out so violently, ran towards her chamber, with many of his nobles following him, to know what was the matter: To whom the empress cryed, O my lord, do me justice! behold this traitorous son of yours, the most debauched that ever sin and heat put strength into; see the fruits of the good doctrine which the traitor hath learned, not to vouchsafe to answer the least word to the questions you demanded of him, and, and yet without shame, to ask that of me, which is not lawful to think or speak of; and because I would not consent, he has made my face all bloody, torn my vesture, and the ornaments of my head; and if you had not come in, as you did, he had forced me to his wicked and libidinous appetite.

When the emperor heard this, filled with rage, he caused a counsel immediately to be called, and being seated on his throne, he passed sentence of death upon his son; commanding, that within three hours he should be put to the most cruel and ignominious death that could be imagined.

The lords and nobles hearing that sentence of death was passed upon the prince, told the emperor, that the law was ordained for transgressors: and that if the prince must be put to death, it ought to be done according to form of law, lest

it should be said, that the emperor in his wrath, without law or justice, had put to death his only son.

The emperor approving of this advice, commanded him to be put in prison, till judgment was legally given against him.

HISTORY VIII.

The Empress being grieved that the prince is respited, incites the Emperor to put him to death, by a story of a medicinal tree, lopt down for the sake of a young plant that came to nothing.

WHEN the empress understood that the prince was not put to death, she retired into her apartment very disconsolate. And when night came, the emperor entering into the chamber to go to bed, found her full of grief; to whom he said, my dear lady, what is it that makes you so uneasy? she answered, you see how your accursed son hath shamed and dishonoured me, and though you pronounced sentence of death upon him, yet it is not executed, and he still lives for to shame me, and to be a reproach upon my honour and virtue.

The emperor replied, leave off this immoderate trouble; I will surely revenge your cause in as ample a manner as you can wish, and to-morrow he shall die by the law.

Then said she, must he live so long? it may perhaps happen to you as it did to a burgess in Rome, who had a tree of great virtue. What tree was that, said the emperor, and what hap-

pened about it? to which the empress replied in the following

EXAMPLE.

IN the city of Rome lived a burgess, who had a stately garden, in which was a tree, that every year brought forth fruit of such an extraordinary virtue, that whosoever eat thereof, was cured of all his maladies or diseases.

It happened that from the root of the tree sprung a sucker so beautiful, that the gentleman was very much delighted with it; hoping by this means, in process of time, that it would become as useful as the old one.

The tree grew well at first; but being grown up to a pretty height, the branches of the old tree kept the sun from it, so that it did not thrive; which the gentleman observing, asked the gardener the reason thereof; who answered, that the boughs of the great tree kept the sun and air from it.

Whereupon the burgess ordered him to lop off the branches of the old one; which the gardener accordingly performed.

Another time, the burgess coming again to see the young plant, and perceiving that still it did not thrive, said to the gardener, what hinders its growth now? he replied, I suppose the height of the old tree shades it from the sun and rain, and therefore it cannot grow; then said the master, hew down the old tree to the ground; for of this sucker I hope to have a better tree than ever that was.

This the gardener likewise immediately execu-

ted; but no sooner was the old tree hewed down, than the young plant, wanting natural moisture and nutriment, which it drew from the old one, utterly perished: And thus was this tree, which had been of such excellent use and virtue, intirely destroyed, for which, both the burgess and his advisers gained the curses of all the poor, who, by the benefit of this tree, were constantly cured of their diseases.

The empress having thus ended her example, proceeded to make an answer thereto, by way of moral, as follows.

MORAL.

"This tree, my lord, said she, is an emblem of your noble person, by whose justice and bounty, many poor, sick and blind people are much comforted and restored, and the young sucker, or plant, which grew under the great tree, is your accursed son, who now begins to grow in cunning and artifice, and studies first, how he may lop off the boughs and arms of your might, and insinuate himself into the favour of the people; and then most unnaturally and wickedly imagines to destroy your sacred life, to make room for himself to reign. But what shall be the consequence? all poor and feeble persons shall curse them, who might have destroyed your son, and did not do it. Therefore I advise you while you have the power in your own hands, to put him to death, lest the curses of the people fall upon you.

Then said the emperor, your counsel is very good, and to shew you my approbation thereof, to-morrow my son shall surely die.

Accordingly the next day, the emperor sat in judgment, and commanded his officers to lead the prince to execution, with trumpets sounding before him, in token of death.

HISTORY IX.

Pontillas, the first master, stops the execution of the prince, by the history of a dog which saved his master's son from being destroyed by a serpent; yet nevertheless, by a false representation of a woman, was killed, to the great grief of his master.

THE sun was hardly risen next morning, when those to whom the execution of the prince was committed, had provided all things necessary thereunto.

Whereupon, Pontillas, the first master, came and spoke to the officer to delay the execution, for that he hoped, by the grace of God, to deliver the prince from death; and then he hastened to the palace, and kneeling before the emperor, desired the favour to be heard what he had to say in behalf of the prince.

The emperor answered and said, "I delivered my son to you to be well educated, and now you have debauched his morals, and brought him home dumb, and so lewd, that he has endeavoured to defile his father's bed; therefore assure yourselves that he shall die first, and you shall none of you long survive him."

Pontillas replied, "My lord, your majesty, I hope will do nothing rashly, or unworthy your

great prudence. It is incredible to me, that the prince would have raviſhed the empreſs, for I muſt aſſure your majeſty, that for the ſpace of ſixteen years, which he has been amongſt us, we have never perceived any thing but virtue, and innocency in all his actions and behaviour: And therefore, I beſeech you in this important caſe, not to give way ſo much to anger, as to execute your only ſon, barely for the accuſation of a woman, leſt it ſhould happen to you worſe than it did to a knight, who, through the words of his wife, killed his good grey-hound, that ſaved the life of his ſon."

The emperor deſiring to hear the ſtory, Pontillas anſwered, that he was ready to obey his majeſty, provided he would recal his ſon, and defer his execution till the next day. To which the emperor aſſenting, Pontillas began as follows:

EXAMPLE.

IN Rome there lived a gentlemen that had but one ſon, who was carefully nurſed in his own houſe: He had alſo a grey-hound, ſo good, that he never ran at any game, but he took it; beſides ſome other extraordinary qualities, that his maſter much admired him for.

It happened one day that there was a running at tilt and tournament, in the public place appointed for that purpoſe, to which this gentleman, amongſt others, reſorted: And no ſooner was he gone, but his lady, with her maidens alſo, went to ſee it; the nurſe alſo, to ſatisfy her curioſity, went privately, and left the child lying in

the cradle in the hall, and the grey-hound in the room.

The gentleman's houſe being out of repair, in the very room where the child was, iſſued out of a hole a great and horrible ſerpent, which approaching the cradle with all ſpeed, to ſlay the child, the grey-hound perceived it, and flew at the ſerpent to preſerve the child; and ſo furious was the engagement, that the cradle was overturned, with the child in it, the bottom upwards: but without any harm to the child, becauſe the cloaths fell underneath, and the cradle ſtood on the four pummels.

The dog being enraged, as well at the wounds he received of the ſerpent, as the wrong deſigned his young maſter, fell with redoubled fury upon the ſerpent, and at laſt remained victorious, tearing the ſerpent in ſuch a manner, that he was all beſmeared with his blood; and then he laid himſelf down in his place and licked his wounds.

Not long after this, the tilting being ended, the nurſe came into the chamber, and ſaw the cradle turned upſide down, compaſſed round about with blood and the grey-hound likewiſe all bloody; and without looking any further, tore her cloaths, and in a fright, with outrageous cries, carried the ſad news to her lady, that the grey-hound had ſlain the child.

Hereupon the mother, full of deſpair and grief for the loſs of her only ſon, likewiſe rent her cloaths, and broke out into diſmal exclamations, and her maidens who had accompanied her, adding to the lamentation, made the whole houſe ring; and yet not any of them had the wit to go and turn the cradle up to ſee what had happened,

continuing their outcries, till the gentleman returned from the tournament, to whom the lady, with tears and aggravations, related what ſhe had imagined by the nurſe's diſcourſe.

The knight hearing theſe ſad tidings, full of rage and grief, went into the hall; where meeting the poor grey-hound, who came fawning upon him, as he uſed to do, and ſeeing him all bloody, he immediately concluded, that all they had told him was true; and drawing out his ſword, he run him quite through the wind-pipe and neck, ſo that the poor dog fell down dead at the feet of his miſtaken maſter. No ſooner had the angry knight done this, but he went and took up the cradle, and there he found his ſon alive and well, and ſeeing then the ſlaughtered ſerpent, which no body has minded before, he perceived the grey-hound had killed the ſerpent in defence of the child: Whereupon, being full of grief, he ſorrowfully cried out, "Ah! poor dog! that thy friendſhip and loyalty ſhould be ſo unfortunate to thee, to cauſe thy death, inſtead of recompence, which thou didſt deſerve for preſerving my little child.

And ſaying this, he broke his ſword in pieces, and went towards the holy land, and abode there all the days of his life; and all this was occaſioned by giving too much credit to the words of a raſh woman.

MORAL.

Pontillas, having thus ended his example, ſaid, the moral or applications of what has been ſaid, my lord, is, that this will be your own caſe if you

give credit to the words of your wife; and therefore, as your majeſty's dutiful ſubject, I muſt humbly advice you, not to be ſwayed by prejudice or paſſion, but let the cauſe be examined into; for if the gentleman had but enquired into the matter deliberately, he had not killed his greyhound for the report of his wife.

The emperor gave ſuch attention to the example and advice of the philoſopher, that he put a ſtop to the execution of the prince until further orders; And thus was the prince preſerved the firſt day.

HISTORY X.

The Empreſs, by the ſtory of a wild boar, that was was ſlain by the deceit of the herdſman, perſuades the Emperor to execute the prince.

WHEN the empreſs underſtood that the prince was reprieved from execution, ſhe went to the emperor, weeping bitterly, complaining, "That he ſhewed the little eſteem he had for her honour and his, by retarding juſtice; and, that ſhe did not queſtion, but he would be convinced of his error, by fatal experience, when it would be too late, becauſe he gave ſo much ear to the flattery and deceit of the philoſophers, which would certainly be his ruin; as it happened to a wild boar, who was deſtroyed by the flattery of a herdſman or ſhepherd.

The emperor deſiring to hear the example, the empreſs replied, I ſhewed you one before, but ſee no effect it had; nevertheleſs, I will obey you a-

gain, and relate this example to you: And ſo ſaying, ſhe began as follows.

EXAMPLE.

IN the great and ſpacious foreſt of Ardennes, was a wild boar, ſo cruel and fierce, that he devoured many people: Whereupon, the king cauſed a proclamation to be publiſhed throughout his dominions, that whoever could ſlay the boar, ſhould have his only daughter in marriage, and after his deceaſe, his kingdom.

Notwithſtanding, this great reward, it was a long time before any man was found who had courage enough to encounter the boar. But at laſt a ſhepherd or herdſman undertook the taſk, encouraging himſelf, that if he happened to die in the engagement, there was an end put to a troubleſome and neceſſitous life; but, if he ſucceeded, he ſhould raiſe himſelf and his family for ever to great riches and grandeur.

Being fired with theſe thoughts and reſolutions, he took his ſhepherd's ſtaff, and went to the foreſt; but no ſooner had he entered therein, but the boar eſpied him, and running directly towards him, the ſhepherd to avoid his fury climbed up into a tree. The boar enraged that he could not come at him, began to gnaw the tree with his dreadful tuſks, in ſo violent a manner, that the ſhepherd trembled being extremely afraid that he would have overthrown it. But, it luckily happening that the tree being loaded with fruit, the ſhepherd gathered ſome of it, and threw to the boar, who greedily devoured the ſame, and eat

ſo much, that he quite gorged himſelf, and lay down under the tree in order to ſleep.

The cunning ſhepherd watching his opportunity, deſcended the tree by little and little, and knowing the nature of ſwine, with one hand he clawed the boar, and with the other held himſelf about the tree. The boar pleaſed with being thus tickled, turned up his belly, and the ſhepherd continuing ſcratching of him, he fell aſleep. Then the ſhepherd, reſolving to make ſure work, drew out his knife, and cut his throat; and afterwards cutting off his head, he carried it to the king, who, according to his promiſe, gave him his only daughter, in whoſe right, after his deſceaſe, he was made king.

M O R A L.

Then ſaid the empreſs, "The mighty boar is an emblem of your mighty perſon, whom no man by force and open ſtrength can withſtand. The ſhepherd, with his ſtaff, repreſents your wicked ſon, who with the ſtaff of cunning, already begins to plot againſt your honour and dignity. As the herdſman tickled the boar aſleep, and then killed him; ſo the maſters of your ſon tickle your fancy with fables and flattery, till at laſt they will take away your life, that your wicked ſon may reign."

The emperor replied, "God forbid that they ſhould ſerve me as the ſhepherd ſerved the wild boar; therefore to prevent it, my ſon ſhall certainly die to-morrow." At this the empreſs departed very joyfully and well contented.

HISTORY XI.

Lentulus, the second master, preserves the prince by the story of a woman that caused her husband to be set in the pillory unjustly.

THE second master, named Lentulus, hearing that the emperor had ordered his son to be executed, immediately hastened to him, and said, "My gracious Lord, if you put your son to death for the words of your wife, it will happen to you worse than it did to a certain knight, who through the treachery of his wife, was unjustly set upon the pillory."

The emperor being desirous to hear that example, Lentulus insisted that a stop should be first put to the execution of the prince; to which the emperor consenting, he thus began.

EXAMPLE.

IN the famous city of Mantua lived an ancient knight, who married a beautiful young wife, whom he loved above all earthly things; but left his age not concurring with the expectations of her more vigorous youth, should incline her to incontinence, and encourage her in a lawless flame, he was not wanting to do all in his power to confine her within his house; and every night he locked the gates with his own hands, and secured the keys under his bed head.

But notwithſtanding all the precautions and care of the old knight, his young wife found means to meet her gallant, and ſupply his defect, by taking the keys from under his bed's head, when he was faſt aſleep, and opening the door, went to her paramour: and having enjoyed one another to mutual ſatisfaction, ſhe returned; and laying the keys where ſhe found them, ſilently crept into bed to her huſband.

But after ſhe had frequently thus purſued her unlawful amours without being diſcovered, at laſt her huſband happened to awake, when ſhe was gone to proſecute her accuſtomed delights, and miſſing his wife, he felt for the keys; but not finding them, he got up, and went to the door, which he found only on the lock; and then bolting it, he returned to his chamber, and looked out of the window to ſee what time ſhe returned.

Now we muſt obſerve, that in the ſame city was a law, that at a certain hour in the night, a bell was rung, after which, if either man or woman was found in the ſtreets, they were detained in priſon till the next morning, and then put into the pillory, as objects of ſhame and deriſion unto all beholders.

When it was very late, or rather early, his wife came from her gallant, but found the door bolted againſt her; however, ſhe took the boldneſs to knock. The good old knight looking out at the window, and ſeeing it was his wife, reproached her in the following manner: "O thou wicked and unchaſte woman! ſaid he, have I found thee out; how often may I conclude thou haſt committed adultery, and defiled thy marriage bed? aſſure thyſelf, laſcivious creature, that thou ſhall

ſtand there till the ringing of the bell, that the watch may ſeize thee, and thou mayeſt meet with the puniſhment due to thy abominable perfidiouſneſs and adultery.

She anſwered in an humble, diſſembling tone, why does my dear lord and huſband thus unjuſtly charge me with a wicked crime, which my known chaſtity abhors from my ſoul; God is my witneſs, I am innocent of this grievous accuſation; for if you will know the truth, I was ſent for by my mother, who was taken dangerouſly ill; and you being faſt aſleep, I was loth to awake you, and ſo with all poſſible ſilence I aroſe, and taking the keys, I opened the door, and went, as my duty obliged me, to my ſick mother, whom I found ſo very ill, that I fear ſhe cannot live till morning; but for all that, my affection is ſo great to you that I came away, and left a dying mother, to return to a dear and loving huſband; wherefore, I beſeech you, for the love of God, let me in, and do not for my great affection to you, expoſe me to ſhame and diſgrace.

Theſe plauſible pretences did not prevail upon the old knight, who juſtly looked upon her as guilty of adultery and falſhood, and therefore he abſolutely refuſed to let her in. Hereupon ſhe reminded him, what a diſgrace it would be, were ſhe taken by the watch, not only to herſelf but to him, and all their relations; uſing beſides, all the arguments her ſubtle invention could imagine neceſſary to prevail upon him; but finding all her prayers to no purpoſe, and that he remained inexorable, ſhe bethought herſelf of a ſtratagem, which ſhe proſecuted after the following manner:

My lord, said she, you know that by this door there is a well; if you let me not in, I will drown myself to avoid the shame that is coming upon me and my friends.

As the old gentleman was going about to reprove her further, and to threaten her, in hopes to deter her thereby from the like practices for the future, and then intending to let her in, and out of his great love and good nature, to forgive her; the moon went down, and the night was obscured with a darkness more than usual. Overjoyed at this advantage, she pursued her stratagem, and with an audible voice, and a dismal tone she thus expressed herself.

That I may die like a Christian, I will make my last will; and first I bequeath my soul to heaven, and my body to the earth; but all other worldly goods whatever, I bequeath to my dear husband, for him to dispose of as he shall think convenient.

Having thus finished her pretended will, she went to the well, and there finding a great stone, she took it in her arms, and lifting it up, cried out, now I drown myself! and so threw the stone into the well, squealing after it very artfully, to make her husband the more readily believe it was her. This done, she crept softly and hid herself behind the door again.

Her stratagem had its desired effect; for the good old knight verily believing that his wife had been as good as her word, ran hastily down to the well, making a lamentable outcry all the way from his great tenderness to her.

Now observe the perfidiousness and crafty contrivance of this wicked woman, to turn the tables

upon her too indulgent huſband; for though, before ſhe had injured him in the higheſt degree imaginable, yet now ſhe makes him ſuffer publicly for her ſcandalous crimes; and inſtead of reparation to his abuſed honour, ſhe by the falſeſt accuſations, and moſt complicated wickedneſs, procures him to be puniſhed in the pillory as a debauched perſon, for her adulteries; and thereby at once clear herſelf, be revenged on her innocent huſband for threatening her before, and all this at the price of her reputation and good name.

The old knight was no ſooner out, but ſhe got in, and having locked the doors, went up into the chamber, and looked out of the window, as he had done before: And having a long while heard the good old man grievouſly lament for her ſuppoſed loſs, and condemning himſelf for too much rigour, laughing all the time at him, for his indulgence and love, ſhe at laſt, in opprobrious terms, called out to him, reproaching him in the vileſt manner imaginable, calling him letcherous dotard, and upbraiding him with ſlighting her, and going continually out on nights after harlots.

The old good man was ſo overjoyed to hear his wife was alive, that he valued not what ſhe ſaid; and deſiring her to have a better opinion of him, he begged her to open the door, and paſſing by all, they would be good friends.

But all his prayers and intreaties availed nothing, ſhe vowed he ſhould ſtay till the watch came, that he might deſervedly ſuffer, as he had threatened her before. The knight, in his own vindication, pleaded that it was an improbable thing, that he ſhould be guilty of ſuch vices, ſeeing his advanced years rendered him unqualified

for the delights of love; alledging further, that out of pure affection to her, he was now in the ſtreets; and therefore deſired her not to let him ſuffer ſhamefully.

She confidently anſwered, That it was God's goodneſs that he had given him time to repent; and therefore he ought to be thankful, and ſuffer patiently.

The knight replied, That God was merciful, and required nothing more of a ſinner, than that he ſhould repent of his ſins paſt, and amend his life; therefore, dear wife, ſaid he, I beg of you to let me in.

She ſaid, Who the devil made you ſo good a preacher; but for all that you come not in here. And as he was ſtudying ſome new perſuaſions to prevail upon her to let him in; the watch came, and finding him in the ſtreets, demanded what he did there at that unſeaſonable time of night? reminding him withal, that he had broke the law of the city, and though he was an ancient inhabitant thereof, that could not excuſe him from ſuffering according to the nature of the offence.

His wife hearing theſe words, cried out to the watchmen, Now is the time, honeſt men, for you to avenge me on that foul adulterer, who is ſo inſatiate in his luſt, that he never fails at night to forſake my bed, and follow his ſtrumpets. In hopes of reformation, I have patiently forborn him a great while; but nothing will reclaim him, ſlighting my youth, and continuing ſtill in his wicked whoredoms; therefore now puniſh him according to his deſerts, that he may be made an example to all ſuch doating letchers as he is. Ac-

cordingly he was carried to prison, and he, next morning, shamefully stood in the pillory.

MORAL.

Now, said the master to the emperor, have you minded well the story? and he said, yes. Then said the master, if you execute your son, through the instigation of your wife, your condition may prove more unfortunate than the knight's.

Whereupon the emperor condemned the baseness of the woman, and said, "That for that very cause Diocletian should not die." The master having applauded his resolution, and humbly thanked him for it, he departed.

HISTORY XII

The Empress, by the story of a son that cut off his father's head, and killed his mother, perjuaded the Emperor to execute Diocletian.

WHEN the empress understood that the prince was not ready she wept bitterly, and upbraided the emperor for the little love that he seemed to have for her, and his unsettled mind, by giving heed to every windy fable of the wise masters; who, by their gilded counterfeit expressions, toiled him to and fro, as chaff before the wind; asking if ever he read any history, that the execution of a sentence, pronounced by the emperor himself, was retarded, as this is now. Yet, however, says she, I will discharge my conscience,

being assured, that in the end, you will find all my sayings were to preserve your life and honour; whereas, others only aim at your utter ruin and destruction, as it happened to a treasurer of Egypt, who, by following the dictates of his son, both he and his wife died miserably.

Then the emperor desired her to relate the story; she replied, I will my lord; and accordingly began as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

IN Rome there lived a knight, who took such pleasure in hunting, gaming, and profuse living, that he came to great poverty and want; and then he advised with his son, what way they should take, whereby they might subsist, and brave it among their companions as formerly. The son whose extravagancies had been as great as his father's, told him he had thought on a way, if he would be ruled by him, by which their wants might be supplied: The knight was very desirous to be informed. The way, says the son, is this:

The emperor Octavian abounds in gold and silver, which is piled up in a great tower, let us contrive how to come at it, by breaking through the wall, which is easy to effect. This pleased the father, who said, I like this project very well. And to that end, having prepared instruments for their purpose, he and his son entered one night into the tower where the treasure lay, and having loaded themselves with gold and silver, returned through the hole they had made; and stopping it up, made the earth plain as it was before, to prevent its be-

ing diſcovered. Then they returned home, being jolly, and living as profuſely as ever, reſolved to take the ſame courſe again, if they heard no noiſe of their robbery.

Now, the keeper of the tower at laſt miſſed ſome of the treaſure, and looking diligently about, perceived the hole that was made through the wall; whereupon, he began to conſider if it were poſſible to intrap the thieves; and for that purpoſe he made a great cauldron, and filled it full of pitch, bird-lime, and ſuch like ſtuff, and placed it at the hole that gave entrance into the tower; ſo that no man could come in at the hole, but he muſt unavoidably fall into the cauldron, and it would forcibly retain him.

Now, it was not long ere the knight and his ſon had ſpent all their gold and ſilver, and hearing no noiſe about the robbery, concluded to carry away more money; and to that end, made choice of a night very dark, and went to the place where they had entered before, and the father entering firſt into the hole, fell into the veſſel up to the neck, and was ſo faſtned that he could not ſtir; ſo preſently concluded it was a plot for his ſurpriſe, and therefore adviſed his ſon to beware, leſt he ſhould be caught too; what muſt be done then, ſaid the ſon, to get you out?

The father replied, ſon, for the ſafeguard of our honour, cut off my head, to the end, that they may not know my body, and that the name of our family may not be defamed. The ſon conſidering, that of two evils, the leaſt was to be choſen, ſevered his head from his body, and having interred it privately, he returned home, and with tears related the whole matter; beſeeching

his mother and ſiſters to forbear crying, for that would be a means of diſcovering what was yet hidden to the world.

The next day the treaſurer, according to his uſual cuſtom, went to the treaſury, and finding in his trap, a body without a head, was amazed, and went and told the king all that had paſſed. Upon which it was concluded, that the body ſhould be tied to a horſes tail, and drawn through the ſtreets of the city, and at every houſe the cryer ſhould proclaim, "This is the body of the thief which robbed the king's treaſury;" and if they heard any weep, they might conclude he belonged to that houſe.

The king's ſervants did ſo, and at length they came againſt the houſe of its abode; at the ſight whereof, the mother and daughters could not refrain weeping; whereupon, an officer ran into the houſe, and demanded the cauſe of their weeping. The villainous ſon, who was very ſubtle, took up ſuddenly a hatchet, and therewith, in an inſtant wounded his mother in the leg; and then replied, "Our lamentation is occaſioned by our mother's being ſo dangerouſly wounded by a miſchance."

The officer upon this ſuſpected nothing, but anſwered, that they had better endeavour to help her, than cry and lament for her; ſo took his leave. In a ſhort time after, the wound feſtered, and threw the mother into a fever, which deprived her of life; ſo the villanous ſon, with his own hands killed both father and mother.

MORAL.

Then said the empress, God grant the like befal not you; for I am afraid you will be reduced to the same danger that this knight fell into: The knight followed the evil counsil of his son, so lost his honour and his life: The knight's son slew his father and mother, and I fear Diocleſian will do the same by you, and that we shall be in danger of life and honour, unless you open the eyes of your understanding, which I heartily move you to for the preservation of the imperial crown and dignity.

The emperor said, "You have given me a good example, and I shall take care to prevent him serving us as the wicked son served his father and mother; and therefore, to-morrow my son shall die."

HISTORY XIII.

Craton, the third master, prevents the execution of Diocleſian, by shewing the falsehood of a woman, which caused her husband to kill his magpye that told the truth.

CRATON, the third master, hearing that the prince was ordered to be executed, in great haste came before the emperor, and made his reverence to him. The emperor being angry demanded of him, how he durst appear before him, especially at a time so improper? and in

an ironical manner, says, "Is this the rare doctrine you have taught my son, to solicit his mother-in-law to debauchery, and to attempt to force her?"

The philosopher answered, "That as to his being lewd, he could not believe it; and therefore, desired his majesty to consider, that there was no malice comparable to a woman's, as he could prove by a good example of a burgess, who killed his magpye through the deceit of his wife."

The emperor desiring to hear the story, having suspended the death of his son, Craton related it in the following manner.

EXAMPLE.

THERE lived in a certain city of Rome a rich burgess, who had a magpye, which he loved so well, that he taught her to speak; so she might tell him all that she saw and heard.

The burgess was married to a young wife, much more beautiful than honest; he loved her very well; but she requitted it with slight and disrespect, and made choice of a gallant in her husband's absence, to gratify her lustful appetite; which the magpye observing, told her master at his coming home; so that the report thereof spread itself through the whole city.

Her husband thereupon upbraided her with disloyalty and adultery; to which she said, she was innocent, and that he was to blame to believe his magpye, and that as long as he continued so to do, there would be nothing but variance and discord betwixt them. But he replied, the pye

could not lie, for that ſhe ſaw and heard what ſhe told him; and therefore he would believe her rather than his wife.

It happened not long after, that this burgeſs travelled abroad, and was no ſooner gone, but ſhe ſent to adviſe her friend he ſhould come ſecretly to her that night, to enjoy her as he was accuſtomed; Being come, as he entered into the houſe, he ſaid, Deareſt, I am afraid the magpye will diſcover us! but ſhe bid him not fear, for it was dark, and therefore the pye could not ſee them. The pye hearing this, ſaid, It is true, I ſee you not, but I can hear you, and know that you are naughty together, which I ſhall tell my maſter when he comes home. At which the luſty young man was ſtartled; but ſhe bid him be of good courage, and ſhe would be revenged on the pye. So they went and lay together till about midnight, at which time the adultreſs aroſe, and calling her maid-ſervant, commanded her to fetch a ladder, which they ſet up to the roof of the houſe, and then they made a hole therein, juſt over the pye, through which they caſt down water, gravel, and ſmall ſtones, and the like; inſomuch that the poor pye was almoſt killed.

Upon the burgeſs's return, he went to viſit his pye, aſking how ſhe fared in his abſence; the pye replied, maſter, I ſhall ſatisfy you in both.

"Firſt, I have the old news to tell you, that is, that you are a cuckold; for the very night after your departure, your wife entertained a young man all night in bed with her; notwithſtanding, I told them I would inform you thereof: As to my welfare, that very night I had like to have

died, it was ſo tempeſtuous, either raining, hailing, or ſnowing all the night."

The wife hearing this, ſaid to her huſband, "You have hitherto believed in the pye; now, ſhe ſaith, ſhe had like to have died with rain, hail, and ſnow, that ſhe accuſed me of adultery; whereas, there was never any thing clearer, but my innocency." The good man, to be ſatisfied of the truth, enquired of the neighbours, whether that night was fair or foul? Who all affirmed, no night could be fairer. Then going to his wife, he acknowledged the fault of his cruelty, and after that went to the pye, and having railed at her, for ſowing diſcord between man and wife, he wrung her neck off; the wife at the ſight thereof was overjoyed; and when he had killed the pye, he looked up and ſaw a ladder, and a veſſel of water, ſand, and ſtones, which made him ſoon perceive the treachery of his wife; at which he grew ſo troubled, that for the words of his wife, he had killed the pye, that he ſold off all he had, and went on pilgrimage.

MORAL.

Now, ſaid the maſter to the emperor, was not this a falſe and wicked woman, by deceit and craft to cauſe the pye to be ſlain? The emperor anſwered, It is very true, and I pity the poor pye that ſhe ſhould die for her fidelity; and for the ſake of this example, my ſon ſhall not die. The maſter commending the prudence of the emperor, took his leave; having firſt recommended him to the protection of the Almighty.

HISTORY XIV.

The Empress, persuades the Emperor to execute Diocletian, by a story of an Emperor that was blind through the contrivance of seven wise masters; and how he was restored to his sight, by Martin's advising him to cut off their heads.

WHEN the empress heard that the prince was not dead, she fretted like one bereft of her senses; whereupon, the emperor demanded the cause of her lamentation. My lord, said she, you cannot be ignorant of the cause, knowing how I have been abused by your son, as is still visible by the bloody marks that are upon my tender flesh; and you promised me, that he should die for my own sake, but more for yours, fearing that you will be reduced to the same condition of a certain emperor of Rome, who was blind by hearkening to seven wise masters.

Then said the emperor, My dear lady, shew me that example, that it may be a caution to me; for though, in my clemency, I gave one day's respite to my son, it does not follow that I gave him his life; for what is deferred is not forgiven. She said, Then she would gladly tell him that story for his caution, and began as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was in the city of Rome seven wise masters, who chiefly governed the empire,

and perceiving the emperor never acted any thing without their advice, ordered it so by their art, that the emperor should see whilst he was in his palace, but when he went out of it, he should be blind, that they might the more securely manage state affairs, and by this means they enriched themselves much.

Now it happened, that when they had wrought this experiment, they could never dissolve it afterwards; but the emperor continued blind when he went out of his palace.

Another way they had to enrich themselves thus, They proclaimed throughout the empire, that they could interpret dreams, or resolve any difficult question off hand, requiring a guinea for their pains; by which, and other unjust means, they grew richer than the emperor himself.

One day as the emperor sat at table with the empress, he began to sigh, which she perceiving demanded the cause; the emperor said, Is it not a sufficient cause of grief to me that I have been so long blind, when I am out of my palace, and can find no remedy?

The empress said, My lord take my advice, I beseech you, which is this: In your court you have seven wise masters, who govern you and the empire at their pleasure, and I verily believe are the cause of your blindness; and if so, they deserve to die a most shameful death; therefore, first tell them your infirmity, and threaten them upon pain of death, that they find out a speedy remedy for your blindness.

Accordingly the emperor sent for the masters, and charged them on pain of death, to find a present remedy to restore his sight; they desired

fifteen days to give an answer, the emperor granted it; then they consulted how they might restore him to his sight again; but not being able to effect it, they resolved to seek throughout the kingdom for a remedy, and as they were passing along the city, they espied some children playing, and looking upon them, a man came hastily after them with a gorget in gold, and said, "Good masters, I desire you to tell me the meaning of a dream I had last night."

One of the children that played among the others, whose name was Merlin, hearing this, said to him, I will expound your dream without taking any of your gold from you, and also tell you your dream without first acquainting me with it. Last night you dreamed, that sitting in your cellar, you became so dry, that all the drink in your house could not quench your thirst; whereupon a fountain did arise in the middle of the cellar, of the fairest water that ever eye beheld, and when you had tasted of it, you found that your thirst was quenched, and then you caused all your family to drink, who, like you, received all the greatest content imaginable.

Now the interpretation, said Merlin, is this, "Turn home quickly, and dig in the same place where you thought the water sprung, and then you shall find a great quantity of silver, whereby you and your family shall be very rich." The man did so, and there he found a vast quantity of gold, according to the saying of young Merlin. The man offered him as much as he pleased of the treasure, but he would not take any thing thereof.

When the seven wise masters saw this, they

ſtood in admiration, and ſaid, "Child, we ſee much wiſdom in you, that we deſire your advice in a matter of great importance." He deſiring to know what it was, they ſaid, "The emperor of Rome, as long as he is in his palace, hath his ſight without any impediment, but as ſoon as he is out of the palace, he is quite blind; and, if you can reſtore him to his ſight, the emperor will heap great rewards of honour upon you." The child anſwered, "I know the cauſe, and how to remedy it."

They deſired that he would go with them to the emperor, and he ſhould be rewarded to his content. The child went with them, and when they came before the emperor, they ſaid, "My lord, we have brought a child, who can tell you the cauſe of your blindneſs, and alſo how you ſhall recover your ſight."

The emperor turning himſelf to the child, ſaid, "Will you undertake to tell me the cauſe of my blindneſs, and the remedy?" The child anſwered, "My lord, if you will lead me to your bed-chamber, I will tell your majeſty what is to be done." And when he was there he ordered the bed on which the emperor ſlept, to be removed, and then ſaid, he ſhould ſee wonders. That done, they ſaw a well ſmoaking, that was fed by ſeven ſprings, which much ſurpriſed the emperor.

The child ſaid, "You ſee this well, and without it be dried up, your majeſty will never recover your ſight." The emperor ſaid, "Child how can this be done?" He anſwered, "Sir, there is but one way to do it." The emperor ſaid, "Tell us the means, and if poſſible it ſhall be done." The child replied, "My lord, the ſeven ſprings of the

well, are emblems of the seven wise masters, who hitherto have tyrannized over you and your subjects, and have made you blind when you are out of your palace; that they, by their extortion might oppress your subjects, and you not see it. But, though they have found out the means of blinding you, they know not how to remedy it; therefore follow my advice, and you shall see this well extinct and dried up, and you shall have your sight as you had before."

Then he ordered the emperor to send for one of the masters, pretending to confer with him about what Merlin had told him; and when he was come, he commanded his head presently to be cut off, and one spring upon this quickly disappeared; and then he ordered the rest, one by one, to be sent for and be beheaded, and all the springs with the well entirely vanished, and the emperor was restored to his sight, as at the first; for which great cure, he made the child a lord, and gave him great possessions.

Then said the empress, My lord, have you minded what I said? The emperor said, very well.

MORAL.

Then said the empress, "Sir, you want a Merlin, to shew you the abuse of your seven wise masters, who study to take away your sight, that you may not be able to judge of things that you have seen with both your eyes: And in order to this, they so disturb your brains with their fabulous tales, that by degrees they will persuade you

that the villanous actions that Diocleſian had done, ought not to be puniſhed, but rewarded; by which blindneſs, if you ſuffer yourſelf thus to be impoſed upon, I can think no otherwiſe, but that they will in time take away your life, as they have already deprived you of the eyes of your underſtanding, that they may exerciſe their tyranny on the poor Roman empire."

"I ſhall prevent that, ſays the emperor, for tomorrow morning juſtice ſhall take place; not only upon my ſon, but alſo upon his maſters."

HISTORY XV.

Malquedrake, the fourth maſter, ſtops the execution of Diocleſian, by a ſtory of a woman that had wild blood, which her huſband taking from her, prevented her deſign ſhe had to enjoy a prieſt, and cuckold him.

THE emperor next morning commanded without further delay, the ſentence to be put in execution; whereupon, the fourth maſter, named Malquedrake, came before the emperor, and having paid his obeiſance, the emperor chid him very ſeverely, ſaying, that it was through their evil perſuaſions, that his ſon would have committed inceſt with his wife, and therefore they, as well as the villain his ſon, ſhould ſurely die.

"My lord, ſays the maſter, you ſay, that your ſon would have committed lewdneſs with your wife, but that is not proved to be true, therefore you ought not to condemn your ſon to die, for

the words of a ſimple woman; leſt it happen to you worſe than it did to a certain old knight, that married a young lady that was full of bad blood."

"Pray who was that knight and lady, and how runs the ſtory?" ſaid the emperor. The maſter deſiring a reprieve for Dioclefian, whilſt he told it, and the emperor granting it, he began as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was an ancient knight, which was much importuned to marry; and at laſt he conſented, and took to wife a Roman lady, both rich, young, and beautiful, and whom he loved entirely.

After ſome time, the mother paying her daughter a viſit, aſked her how ſhe liked the married ſtate? ſhe anſwerd, not at all; for you have given me an old man, ſays ſhe, fitter to be my father than my huſband; and for my part, I had rather ly and eat with a ſow than with him; and I cannot help it, but I muſt needs love another. The mother ſaid, daughter, God forbid! How long have I been with your father, yet never had ſuch a wicked thought. The daughter anſwered, that is no wonder; for you both met in your youth, and ſhared mutual felicities; but I have not the leaſt pleaſure or ſatisfaction from my huſband, who is old and impotent, and lies in my bed like an immoveable log, or ſenſeleſs thing. The mother replied, if you love another, tell me who he is? The daughter anſwered, I will love a prieſt. The mother anſwered, it were better and leſs ſin, for you

to love a knight, or ſquire, ſhe ſaid, in a while they will forſake me, and then publiſh my ſhame, and a prieſt will not; for he will be ſecret for his own honour, as well as mine; and ſpiritual men are more true to their lovers than laymen.

Then ſaid the mother, Daughter, pray take my advice: old folks are crafty and revengeful, and will take liberty themſelves, but will not ſuffer their wives to take the ſame liberty. It is true, there are ſome who will bear any thing: now I cannot judge of what complexion your huſband is, therefore I think it abſolutely convenient to try his patience before you proceed further. Then the daughter deſired to know how ſhe ſhould prove it. The mother anſwered, In his orchard he has a beautiful laurel tree, which he much admires, cauſe that to be cut down whilſt he is a hunting, and againſt his coming home, make him a fire therewith; and if he eaſily forgive you, then love a prieſt. She thanked her mother for her advice, and promiſed to purſue it.

On the next day the knight rodes a hunting; and purſuant to her mother's advice, ſhe bordered the gardener to cut down the laurel tree, that ſhe might make a fire therewith to warm her lord withal when he came from hunting; the gardener replied, he durſt not; becauſe he knew his maſter loved that tree more than all the trees in the garden. Whereupon, the miſtreſs being angry, gave him many hard ſpeeches, threatening him ſeverely for the little reſpect and obedience he gave to her commands; and then taking a hatchet, ſhe immediately gave ſo many ſtrokes on every ſide, that ſhe ſoon finiſhed what ſhe had begun:

Then the branches by her command, were made into faggots, and in the evening againſt her lord came home, ſhe made a great fire.

The knight aſtoniſhed to ſee a fire made of a laurel tree, began to ſuſpect ſome miſchief had been done to his admired tree, and ſaid to the gardener, I hope this is not my beautiful tree, you know I ſo much admired? The gardener replied, My lord, it is: Whereupon, he began to cry out, that he would ſo ſharply chaſtiſe thoſe that had cut down his laurel, that they ſhould not forget it. His wife hearing threatenings, ran into the room, and ſaid unto her huſband, If you will be revenged for that fact, your vengeance muſt fall on me, for none but I cut down the tree. Why did you ſo, ſays the gentleman? She anſwered, My lord, knowing the weather is very ſharp, and that you would be cold when you came home, I did it to make you a comfortable fire; and knowing very well that the branches of a laurel tree will make a good fire, although they are green, I cauſed them to be made into little faggots, to burn as you ſee; and this is the truth of the matter. You have done very ill, ſays the gentleman, and for the future take care how you diſoblige me; you was furniſhed with other wood in the houſe. Was there no other tree beſides the laurel? And aſſure yourſelf, if you had cut down all the trees in the garden, I ſhould not have been ſo troubled as for this one laurel; but ſince it is done, and cannot be helped, we will ſay no more of it, but for the future take more care.

Thus was the knight's anger pacified, and having ſo eaſily appeaſed him, ſhe was very joyful to

see things succeed so well, and longed for t
good hour of imparting it to her mother.

The next day, when the knight was gone
pass away the time in diversion; away hastes t
good wife to her mother, and tells her all that h
passed, and how good-natured her husband h
shewed himself, and how ready to forgive.

It is very well, said the mother, but though
men for one time forgive, they double the puni
ment another time; therefore I advice you to
him once more. I already, says the daughter, suf
such inexpressible tortures for the love of the pri
and I am no longer able to contain myself; the
fore dear mother, you must excuse me, for I c
not obey you. The mother said, I charge you
my blessing, as well as the blessing of your fath
that you try him once more, and then if you co
off safe, I will allow you to love the priest. Af
some pause, the daughter said, It is very troub
some to restrain so long, however I am ready
obey you; and tell me how I shall provoke h
again?

The mother answered, I know he has a lit
bitch that he much admires; take that bitch a
kill her before his face, and if he forgive it ligh
then love the priest, and welcome. The dau
ter replied, she would obey this once, and q
tioned not but to come off as dexteriously in t
second charge, as she did in the first: So t
parted, each going to their respective homes.

Not long after this, the gentleman walking
broad, he took his bitch with him; his wife t
cleaned the chamber, and the better to adorn
the put a very fair and rich covering upon the b
and sat down by the fire, expecting her husba

return, who at his usual time came home, and sat down by the fire, being very cold; and the ways being very dirty, the little bitch in that dirty pickle, leaped upon the bed, and bemired all the fair covering that was upon it: Whereupon, she took the little bitch by the hinder legs, and threw her against the wall with that violence, that she dashed her brains quite out. The knight was so angry at this outrage, that he had like to have proceeded further than words. My lord, said she, do you see the dirty pickle she has made our bed in, which I have so richly covered? The knight replied, that he valued his little bitch far above his bed, and which she very well knew.

Then she began to weep and lament in such a piteous manner, expressing her sorrow that she had offended her husband, that the gentleman began to be pacified; only he told her, that she had done very ill to his bitch, for so small a fault; saying, he forgave her this time; but I advise you for the future, says he, to take care how you offend.

In the morning she went to her mother to let her know the last passage, pressing her to let her enjoy the priest as she had promised, seeing she had such certain proof of her husband's patience.

The mother made as if she was very glad, and said, Oh! my dear daughter, there is no revenge or subtility above that of old people; therefore that thou may be very safe, try him once more, and then I promise and swear to you, that if your husband continues in that temper, I will, without any delay, give you the content you desire.

The daughter answered, It is an inexpressible pain for me to abstain so long from the love of the

prieſt; yet nevertheleſs, becauſe you have vowed to endeavour my ſatisfaction for the future, I will once more try my huſband, if you will tell me how.

The mother ſaid, I know on Sunday next, he intends to have your father and I, and all your friends, with the chiefeſt perſons in the city, to dine with him; and when you are ſet in your place, and all the diſhes are ſerved on the table, faſten the keys at your girdle privately in the table-cloth, and pretending to have forgot ſomething, ariſe haſtily to fetch it, and by that means throw down the table, and all the diſhes upon it; and if your huſband eaſily forgive it, I ſolemnly declare, and ſwear to you, I will never hinder your deſign again.

The following Sunday, as the mother ſaid, the her huſband, relations, and principal citizens being invited, came to the dinner, and the table being covered with variety of diſhes, the young lady faſtened her keys unto the table-cloth privately, as ſhe was directed, and all of a ſudden aroſe, pretending ſhe had forgot ſomething, and in her riſing, ſhe pulled down the table, and all that was upon it.

The knight was troubled in his mind at this exploit, but wiſely making the beſt of it before his gueſts, and being very diſcreet, took no notice of it then, leſt he ſhould diſturb the company; but cauſed the table to be taken up, and ordered other proviſion to be brought. There was plenty of all ſorts of victuals; and the day paſt away in merriment, without thinking of any thing but paſtime.

The next morning early, the knight went to a

barber, and aſked him, If he was expert in letting of blood? He anſwered, Sir, I am acquainted with all the veins that you can name in a man's body. The knight then deſiring him to go along with him, and leading him to his lady's chamber, he told her, That he has brought a man to let her blood. Alas! ſaid ſhe, why muſt I bleed now, that never was bled in my life? Beſides, I am, I praiſe God, very well, and luſty. You are too luſty, ſays her huſband, and that makes you ſo wanton and light-headed, at every turn play the fool to my diſpleaſure and your own ſhame. Do you remember, that the other day you hewed down the laurel, which I loved above all the trees in my garden; a little while after you killed my bitch, the pleaſanteſt beaſt I ever had in my houſe; and yeſterday you threw down the table, to my great ſhame and diſgrace; and if I ſhould ſuffer you thus to go on, the fourth offence would exceed all the reſt; therefore I purpoſe to cure you, and to that end, have brought this barber to do this office. Upon which ſhe began to pray very devoutly for forgiveneſs, and ſhe would never any more offend him. The knight told her, it was in vain to cry for mercy now; and that except ſhe were ſubmiſſive to his order, he would have her heart's blood.

And after he had bled her till her colour began to change, and ſhe looked very pale, he bid the barber ſtop it, and then bleed her in the arm, which he did to that degree, that at laſt ſhe ſwooned away, and then he ordered the barber to ſtop it: And when ſhe was come a little to herſelf again, he ordered her to be put to bed, and ſtudy for the

future to amend her life, proteſting, that the next fault ſhould coſt her, her heart's blood.

Her maidens having put her to bed, ſhe bid them in all haſte, ſend a meſſenger to her mother, to acquaint her, that ſhe deſired to ſpeak with her before ſhe died. The mother gueſſing at what had happened, and being glad of the correction of her daughter, came quickly to her, and, being entered into the chamber, the young lady very faintly ſaid, O mother, I am almoſt dead; for I have bled ſo much, that I think I cannot live. Did not I tell you, ſaid the mother, that old men are ſubtle and cruel? Will you now have the prieſt, and I will go immediately for him? The young lady replied in a very low tone, Do not talk to me of the prieſt, all my fire is extinguiſhed; it is no time now to ſpeak of love, but think of giving me ſome cordial reſtorative.

MORAL.

From this, Sir, ſays the maſter, I infer, that when women give way to inordinate deſires, and cannot be obliged to their ſatisfaction, revenge in one kind or other, is often the effect of their reſentment; and further, this ſhews that good men will bear with ſmall injuries, as the loſs of a tree, of a dog, or the like; but the cruelty is too great to deprive an emperor of his only ſon, whoſe innocence I queſtion not, but will very ſoon appear, and thoſe found culpable who deſign his ruin.

The emperor hearing this notable example, deferred the execution of his ſon, till the fact was more deliberately examined; telling the maſter,

That for the sake of the story, the prince should not die that day.

HISTORY XVI.

The Empress inducth the Emperor to execute Diocletian, by a story of three wise masters, that ruined a prince and his nation, by pretending to discover hidden treasure.

THE empress hearing the prince was not executed, immediately dressed herself, and caused her coaches to be got ready, as though she designed to go into her own country to her father, to complain, how she had been abused, and could have no redress.

The servants telling this to the emperor, that the empress was going into her own country, he went unto her, to know the reason of this sudden departure, saying, I was in hopes you loved me so well, that you desired to be no where in the world but with me.

She answered, It is true, my lord, I love you more than myself; but I had rather hear of your death, than see you destroyed by the cunning and subtle devices of your wife masters. The emperor replied, Dear madam, do not leave me, for the world will certainly censure us both, for parting after we have lived together happily so long. Truly, Sir, said the empress, the blame is yours; for have you not promised me several times, that your son should die for the abuse he offered me, and yet he is alive to my disgrace; and therefore how can I believe what you say? The emperor

answered, A prince in matters of life and death, ought to proceed with the utmost caution; and especially where the life of an only son lies at stake; who is heir apparent to the crown after my decease; therefore what would you have me to do? She answered, I will gladly tell you what I would have you to do, in a notable example, which will make you for the future not so willing to hearken to the matters. And then she began as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

THERE reigned in Rome an emperor named Octavius, who was very rich, and loved gold above all things. In his reign the Romans committed many hostilities upon the neighbouring nations, insomuch that many nations entered into an alliance against the Romans for their preservation. And that which occasioned their reducing other nations to obedience, was the great security they had by the contrivance of one Virgil, that was a great magician; so that if any people did but offer to rebel, it was immediately discovered to them.

The story says, that he made a tower, wherein he placed as many images as there are kingdoms in the world, and in the hand of every image he put a bell; so that if any nation, at any time, designed to invade the Romans, the image of that province would ring his bell; which the citizens of Rome hearing, armed themselves immediately, and attacked their adversaries; so that the Romans were dreaded throughout the world. He also made, for the benefit of the poor, a fire, which yielded so great a

heat, that the poor inhabitants came commonly to it, and by the help thereof ſaved the expence of a fire in their own houſes; juſt oppoſite to this fire was placed a great ſtatue of braſs, holding in his left hand a Turkiſh bow, which was drawn with his right hand to the very head, ready to let fly; and on the bow was written,

Touch me not; for if you do,
You will create a deal of woe.

The image ſtood there many years; but at laſt a drunken ſcholar looking upon the writing, imagined that there was under it a great treaſure, and that the ſuperſcription was only to frighten people from taking it; whereupon he gave the image ſuch a blow that it fell to the ground, and immediately the fire was extinguiſhed, and the place became as cold as if there never had been any fire there. At which the ſcholar was amazed, and doubting what would become of him if it were known, he ran away, having deprived the city of one of its great commodities, and the poor inhabitants curſed him for it.

After this, three kings that had ſuffered much by the Romans, conſulted how they might revenge themſelves of the Romans for it; but one made anſwer, that it was in vain to attempt it, ſo long as the tower and images ſubſiſted. Upon this ſtarted up three wiſe maſters, and told them, That if they would give them conveniences, they would undertake to ruin and deſtroy the tower and the images. The king demanding what the coſt would be, they replied, Three tons of gold.

The king hearing their demands were ſo ſmall,

ſaid to the maſters, If God will finiſh the inchantment, we will eaſily obtain our ends.

The maſters then made choice of three veſſels, one of earth, another of braſs, and the third of ſilver, and they filled them with gold as much as they could carry, and departed for Rome, in a frigate which they had provided, where being landed, they went to the city, and being near it, they buried one of the veſſels in a place, which they took notice of; then going into the city, they did the ſame with the other two, burying them near to the principal church of the city, ſo ordering the earth, that it could not be diſcerned that the place had been lately digged. This done, and having remained ſome little time in Rome, they agreed how they ſhould accompliſh their deſign.

After this manner they effected it. They went early one morning to Octavius, of whom having demanded audience, they told him, They were three brethren ſkilled that were in magic, and that they had revealed to them, that the city of Rome abounded much in hidden treaſure, and they were come thither to diſcover it; firſt with having the licence and permiſſion of his majeſty, promiſing to give him all they found, and that he might beſtow on them what part he pleaſed. The emperor was very glad to hear this news, and immediately agreed to their requeſt; and as he was going to bed, they ſaid, My lord, this night the eldeſt of us will have a viſion or dream, and the third day he ſhall ſhew you what it ſignifies. The emperor ſaid, God give you a good dream. And when the third day was come, he went early to the emperor, and ſaid, A treaſure will be diſcovered to us, at ſeven of the clock this morning with-

out the city, and ſince we find a treaſure without the city, we may very well expect to find a greater within it. The emperor was very joyful to hear what the dreamer ſaid, and told him, That he would go along with him to ſee the iſſue of the buſineſs. And away they went towards the place where the maſters ſaid the treaſure was hidden; and when they came there, the maſter took an aſtrolobe and quadrant to find out the place, exactly where the treaſure was, and having diligently meaſured the ground, he bid them dig, being aſſured that in that place the treaſure lay; and it was not long they had digged, but they diſcovered a veſſel; which the emperor ſeeing, he himſelf would take it up; and finding it to be as the maſter had ſaid, he returned to his palace very well ſatisfied, giving a great reward to the maſter, and hoping in a little while, by their means, to be maſter of a mint of gold.

The next night, another of them told the emperor, that he ſhould have a viſion; and next morning he told the emperor, That he had ſeen a viſion, and that in the city, they ſhould find a treaſure, twice as much as they found the day before; and accordingly he ordered one to dig near the tower, where they had buried the other two veſſels of gold, and after they had digged a while, they diſcovered two veſſels, and both were filled with gold.

This ſo increaſed the affection of the king towards theſe raſcally maſters, that he did nothing without their advice and counſel; and having given them a great reward, was in great expectation to ſee the effects of the third maſter's viſion. Accordingly, next morning he went unto the empe-

mer, and told him with a smiling countenance, That not far from hence, he had seen a treasure in his vision, much richer than both the other; and that the place where the treasure lay, was six hundred yards from the palace; and then by the help of the astrolobe and quadrant, he measured the ground, and found that the treasure lay just under the foundation of the tower, where the images and statues were placed.

The emperor at this saying was a little startled, saying, God forbid, that I should for the love of gold destroy the tower, which may truly be said to be the prop of the Roman empire. The master answered, That it would be great impudence to hazard so rich and excellent a treasure as the tower was, which exceeded all the treasures in the world, and not only to gain another lesser treasure that was hidden in the earth; but if so great a treasure might be attained without damaging the miraculous tower, that then it would be indiscretion to let it lie there, and I dare undertake, says he, to dig under the foundation as deep as you will, without the least prejudice in the world to the tower.

The emperor hearing this, was overjoyed, and in the night orders them to be let into the tower, which with the utmost expedition and diligence they undermined; and very early next morning mounted their horses, and rode away to their own country with great joy; and before they were all out of the city of Rome, the tower fell down; and thus by the villainy of those three masters, was the wonder of the world, and prop of the Roman empire destroyed.

The senators hearing what was done, in great

consternation go to the emperor, to know the reason of the tower's being destroyed; he answered, Three treacherous wise masters, who pretended to be soothsayers, persuaded me, that a prodigious quantity of gold was hid under the foundation of the tower, which they would discover without any hurt to the tower or the statues, and I giving credit to them, they have deceived me. These masters returning home were received with much joy, and greatly rewarded; and it was not long after that the enemy came against the Romans, and being unprovided, they took the city, and the emperor Octavius had hardly the liberty to make his escape; who, from being a powerful prince, was reduced to the necessity to turn schoolmaster, and teach publicly in the island of Merlin.

And thus as the unextinguishable fire was put out by a drunken scholar; so the tower was destroyed by the craft and cunning of three wise masters, and the emperor of Rome forced to retire as a banished man into an island, and there to spend the remainder of his miserable life.

MORAL.

This tower, where the statues were, represents your person; for so long as you reign, there is no enemy dares disturb the repose of your people, which your son very well knows; and therefore, with the seven wise masters and their false narations and fables, he studies to undermine and destroy you, very well knowing that you are too credulous in hearkening to them. The images are emblems of your five senses, which

being inſatiated by theſe maſters, they will quickly deſtroy you, and ſet your ſon upon the imperial throne. The emperor ſaid, You have given me a good example, and I will take care that it may not happen to me as it did to the tower, for my ſon ſhall this day taſte the bitterneſs of death. The empreſs replied, If you do ſo, your reign will be glorious, and you will have ſucceſs in all your enterpriſes.

HISTORY XVII.

Joſephus, the fifth maſter, prevents the execution of Diocleſian, by a ſtory of one Hippocrates a phyſician, who out of envy ſlew his nephew Galienus, fearing he ſhould be a greater phyſician than himſelf.

THE ſame day the emperor commanded his ſon to be led to the place of execution, whereupon the fifth maſter, named Joſephus, haſtened to the emperor, deſiring audience of his majeſty; but the emperor very angrily told him, That he deſerved death, and that he ſhould ſpeedily have his deſerts: the maſter replied, That they had never ſhewed the prince any ill example; neither did they ever perceive him inclinable to ſuch crimes as were alledged againſt him. As to his ſilence, ſays the maſter, that proceeds from his great wiſdom, as your majeſty will find in a few days, when he will be able to ſpeak for himſelf; but that he would have committed inceſt with the empreſs, is a crime, that ſuch a wiſe prince as he is, would certainly deteſt, and there-

fore I hope your majeſty will not believe it, for if you give credit to the accuſations of your lady, and put your ſon to death, who is the only heir of your empire, your majeſty will not be able to eſcape the divine vengeance, which purſues the authors of unjuſt ſentences, as it did Hippocrates for the death of his nephew Gallienus. The emperor ſaid, I would gladly hear that ſtory; the maſter anſwered, what will it avail to tell your majeſty this ſtory, to defer you from putting your ſon to death, if he ſhould be executed in the meanwhile? But if you pleaſe to ſuſpend the death of your ſon, I will recite the example for your majeſty, and afterwards you may do your pleaſure. The emperor ordering his ſon to be brought back, the maſter began as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was once a famous phyſician named Hippocrates, who in learning and experience excelled all others of the faculty. He had a nephew named Gallienus, who was in ſkill, experience, and practice, equal to his uncle. His uncle envying him, and fearing in time he would excel him, endeavoured to hide from his knowledge every thing he could, leſt he ſhould arrive to a greater perfection in phyſic than himſelf; which Gallienus obſerving, applied himſelf more earneſtly to the ſtudy of it; ſupplying the defects cauſed by his uncle's envy, by his wonderful induſtry, an this ſo much the more troubled his envious uncle.

About this time it happened that the king of

Hungary ſent a meſſenger to Hippocrates to cure his ſon, but Hippocrates being old, excuſed himſelf, and ſent his nephew Gallienus, whom he knew ſufficient for this cure; and when Gallienus came before the king, he was handſomely received by the king and queen; and that they might loſe no time, the king conducted the phyſician to his ſon, and when he had felt his pulſe, and made his obſervation on his diſtemper, he deſired to ſpeak with the queen in private, and then deſired to know of her, Who was the father of the child? She anſwered, Sir, do you think that any but the king is his father? Gallienus anſwered, the king is not his father, She replied, take heed what you ſay. Gallienus ſaid, If you do not tell me truly who is his father, I cannot cure your ſon? So he was going quite away; when ſhe perceived this, ſhe took an oath of him to be ſecret in what ſhe ſhould tell him, and then, ſhe bluſhing thus began.

Sir, I have lived along with the king, without any child, and therefore am accounted barren, and ſlighted by all people, and upon this I purpoſed to know whether the defect was in me or my huſband. Whereupon, I ſeeing the miller one day come into the court, to bring corn to the granary, I cauſed him to enter into my cloſet, where he had to do with me ſeveral times, and by that means I had the ſon by him."

Then ſaid Gallienus ſmilingly, Fear not, madam, that I ſhall reveal the ſecret, and now I queſtion not but to cure your ſon. And after divers remedies which he gave the ſick prince, cauſing him to be nouriſhed with groſs compound meats, according to his natural conſtitution, he recovered;

and when the child was well, after many thanks, and large preſents, both from the king and queen, he returned home.

When he was come home, he acquainted Hippocrates with his ſucceſs, whereupon he aſked him, what he preſcribed? Gallienus told him, compounds. Then ſaid Hippocrates, The queen is not virtuous, and faithful to her huſband. His nephew replied, That was true

Hippocrates, inſtead of taking pleaſure in his nephew's performance, he conceived a mortal hatred againſt him, doubting that the ſkill of his nephew would diminiſh his, ſo he purpoſed privately to kill him; and one day taking him with him into his garden, Hippocrates ſaid, I ſee that herb is of extraordinary virtue, ſtoop down and pluck it up: Gallienus did ſo, whereupon the envious old man drew out his knife, and as he ſtooped down, he ſtabbed him, and buried him privately in the ſame place where he had killed him.

It happened after this, Hippocrates fell ſick of the bloody flux, ſo voilently bad, that all his ſkill and experience ſignified nothing. His former ſcholars hearing this, came to viſit him, and tried if they could do him any good; but all was to no purpoſe. Hippocrates perceiving this, commanded them to fill a great tub to the brim with water, and ordered them to make a hundred holes in it, and when they had done ſo, not a drop of water ran out; whereupon he ſaid, No more virtue comes out of the herbs, than there does water out of the tub; therefore all you do for me ſignifies juſt nothing, but I muſt die. Then he confeſſed the judgment of God was upon him, for murdering his nephew Gallienus, whom, had he been alive, could

have cured me; and when he had ſaid this, he turned to the wall and expired.

The emperor then ſaid, What hurt had it been to Hippocrates if Gallienus had lived? The maſter anſwered, It had been better for Hippocrates, that at that time he had not died.

MORAL.

The application, Sir, ſaid the maſter, is eaſy. It ſhews, that no man ought to do any thing in anger or haſtily; leſt afterwards they ſhould repent it; as Hippocrates did. Sir, ſays the maſter, You have propoſed to put your ſon to death, on the report of your wife, but I deſire you would conſider what you do, and againſt whom; being aſſured that in the concluſion you will find your ſon is innocent of the fact alledged againſt him, of which at preſent you think he is guilty. And, my lord, this is a matter of the greateſt moment, and therefore this weighty affair well becomes the wiſdom of your years, and royalty of your perſon, to conſider well what you do; for you may have more wives, but poſſibly never ſuch a ſon as this, whoſe wit and ability is ſufficient to preſerve your majeſty from danger. The emperor taking great notice of what the maſter ſaid, and the notableneſs of his diſcourſe; this, and natural affection together, ſo wrought upon him, that he ordered the execution that day againſt Diocleſian to be ſtopped.

HISTORY XVIII.

The Empress prevails with the Emperor to execute Diocletian, by a story of a prince that was ruined by the knavery of his wise masters.

THE inconstancy and instability of mankind, appears in the emperor Pontianus, who had no sooner resolved upon any thing, but at the discourse of the adverse party he changed his mind.

Josephus having prevailed for the prince's life, the empress grew so fretful, that the emperor took great notice of it, and said, My lady, why are you so impatient? She answered, My lord, how can I forbear, who am the only daughter of a king, and your wife, who has been most barbarously abused, even in your palace, and presence; and though you have promised to revenge my cause, by punishing the criminal, yet you do not perform it.

The emperor said, I know not what to do. You persuade me to put my son to death, and the masters dissuade me from it; and how to act in this affair, and come at the truth, I know not.

Then, said the empress, This is the cause of my complaint, That you believe the masters more than me, nay, more than your own eyes; for which reason, it will happen unto you as it did to a king of Persia, who was ruined by the wise masters.

I pray you, said the emperor, relate to me all that happened to this king, and I assure you, you shall see yourself revenged both of Diocletian and his masters sooner than you expect. And thus ha-

ving comforted the empress, she began her narrative after this manner.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was a prince of Persia, named Phamentin, who being desirous to enlarge his kingdom, began a war upon his neighbours, and so pursued his victories, that in the end, he conquered all the adjoining countries, and came to the confines of Chaldea, hoping to reduce that kingdom as he had done the rest of their neighbours; and having raised a great army, he entered the country of Chaldea, and put all they met to the sword. The Chaldeans hearing this, they forsook their little towns, and all fled to their strongest city named Hur, where they resolved to defend themselves, purposing to lose their lives, rather than yield to the Persians. The city was so closely besieged, that it was impossible to issue out but with great difficulty, and that by the way of a mountain, which was joined to it. The siege continued several months, and the Persians finding they lost neither their courage, nor wanted provisions, consulted with the three wise masters what they had best to do.

Now these wise masters knowing that the Chaldeans had brought all the treasure into the city Hur, resolved to betray their king, which they effected after this manner. They all three intreated the king to permit them to depart from the camp for some days, to celebrate a sacrifice, in order to discover by the communication of spirits, what means they must use to reduce the Chaldeans to the necessity of yielding. To this the king con-

ſented, intreating them to be diligent in their ſacrifices in the purpoſes aforeſaid.

Theſe wiſe maſters leaving the camp, adviſed the king of Perſia to attempt nothing againſt the city till their return, only to keep it cloſely beſieged, and to take care of his own camp. This done, they travelled unto the mountain, where they remained until night, and then went toward the city, and being perceived by the centinels, who aſked, who come there? They anſwered, friends: and that they ſhould conduct them to the king, to acquaint him with a matter of importance. The guard ſeeing that they were but three, permitted them to enter the city, and they went to the king to acquaint him with their arrival, who cauſed them to come before him preſently, that he might know their buſineſs: They being before the king deſired private audience, and then retiring into a chamber, they declared what they were, ſaying, That the great compaſſion which they had for the poor inhabitants of the city of Hur, had moved them to come thither to advertiſe the king, that if they might be recompenſed equal to their deſert, they would cauſe the ſiege to be raiſed, and make their enemy to leave the country of Chaldea. The king hearing this, and perceiving the deſign of theſe maſters was to get money, offered them thirty thouſand pounds: The maſters were contented, and bid the king encourage his people, for within five days the ſiege by their means ſhould be raiſed; which they performed as you ſhall hear preſently.

In the city of Hur was a very large and high tower. The maſters intending to play their project on this tower, cauſed an image to be made of

gigantic bigneſs, covering the ſame with burning glaſſes, and looking glaſſes of ſeveral colours, wrought together in marvellous order; then they made two golden wings, which gave great luſtre to the image, and painted two ſwords of a bloody colour, that ſhined very clearly. They provided alſo artificial fire-works, to make a great noiſe like thunder and lightning.

All things thus provided and ordered, two of the philoſophers turned the way that they came, and the third ſtayed in the city to execute their project. The next morning, the maſter that ſtayed behind, put on his gigantic habit, and placed the golden wings on his ſhoulders, and put a great crown of gold on his head, and in each hand held a bloody ſword: This done, with the wild fire he made a great noiſe, with flaſhing and cracking, as if the whole city of Hur had been on fire; and in the midſt of the flaming and thundering, the maſter appears on the top of the tower, in the habit deſcribed, ſeeming to be of very large ſtature and ſize, exceeding human proportion; and the ſun beams ſtruck directly on the glaſſes, and dazzled the eyes of the beholders. After the wiſe maſter had for ſome time ſpread his wings, and fluttered with them, he began to brandiſh and flouriſh both his bloody ſwords, ſo that he ſeemed to the beholders to be fighting.

The Perſians, ſeeing this ſtrange and diſmal ſight, were terrified; not knowing what ſhould occaſion it. In the midſt of theſe paſſages, the two other wiſe maſters, who were in the mountain, came running into the camp, and going directly to the king's tent, cried out, They were all dead men. Why? ſaid the king. Do you not

ſee, ſir, ſaid they, the God of the Chaldeans is deſcended from heaven to defend them? So that if we ſtay here any longer, we ſhall all be deſtroyed: Therefore it is neceſſary for us to flee, leaſt we enrage this God, and thereby loſe our lives, as our companion hath done, who having ſeen the apparition of that God, and being deſirous to appeaſe his fury with certain new ſacrifices, which he offered, was ſuddenly ſlain in the mountain by a thunder-bolt; which we ſeeing, made all poſſible haſte to acquaint you, that if you do not this day depart the place, none of your camp will eſcape.

And thereupon, the king and all began to flee, giving as much credit to theſe maſters, as if they had been gods, ſo that in an hour's time the ſiege was raiſed. The beſieged, who were in arms, and ready to ſally out, ſeeing their enemies fly, fell on their rear, and charged them ſo briſkly, that they made as great a ſlaughter as they pleaſed, and took ſo many priſoners, that it was wonderful; for the poor Perſians fled without any order, thinking the God of the Chaldeans was ſtill behind them, ſo that very few eſcaped.

The purſuit being finiſhed, the Chaldeans returned to their city with great riches, for all the baggage of the Perſians was left in the camp. The wiſe maſters facing about, took the way of the mountain, and from thence returned to the city of Hur, where they were highly welcomed, and rewarded according to the agreement: And thus was the king of Perſia deſtroyed by theſe treacherous maſters, for the ſake of money.

MORAL.

'As the king of Perſia was deceived and ruined by his wiſe maſters, ſo your ſeven wiſe maſters deſign to ſerve you, who by their craft and ſubtility delude you, and in the end will betray you, that ſo your ſon may reign in your empire. The emperor anſwered, that ſhall not be, for to-morrow Diocleſian ſhall die.' And accordingly he ordered his ſon to be executed.

HISTORY XIX.

Cleophes, the ſixth maſter, prevents the execution of Diocleſian, by a ſtory of a woman that perſuaded her huſband to murder three knights and a lawyer.

THE ſixth maſter, named Cleophes, hearing what the emperor had decreed, haſtened to the court, and ſaluted the emperor in a humble manner. The emperor, with an angry voice, told him, that he and the reſt of the deceitful maſters ſhould certainly be put to death, for debauching his only ſon. The maſter replied, that if his majeſty would have patience, in three days time he queſtioned not but his ſon would ſpeak, and clear himſelf of all the accuſations laid to his charge; and therefore, if you put him to death for the words of your wife, without doubt it will happen to you as it did to a knight, who gave ſo much ear to his wife, that he was tied to a horſe's tail, drawn through the city, and hanged on a gallows;

the emperor said, For the love of God, tell me that example.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was once an emperor of Rome, that had three knights whom he loved entirely; and in the same city was a knight that had married a beautiful lady, whom he loved and doated upon very much, as you do on the empress. The lady had such a sweet charming voice, that all that heard her were smitten with it. Amongst the rest, one of the knights happened to ride that way where she lived, who was so ravished with her beauty and voice, that he immediately fell in love with her so going in, he revealed his passion to her, and demanded what he should give to sleep by her, side one night? She answered, one hundred pounds; then said the knight, Appoint the time, and I will give it you; she answered, When I see a convenient time I will send for you, sir. The next day she sung in the same place, and the second knight came that way, who being likewise smitten with her, promised her one hundred pounds upon the same account. The third day, by accident, came the other knight, to whom she also consented on the same terms. These three knights so secretly agreed with the lady, that not one of them knew of the design of the other.

After this, the lady told her husband she had a matter of great importance to reveal unto him, and if he would follow her direction, they should live in pomp and splendor all their days. He promising he would, she said, The emperor's three

favourites are fallen in love with me, and unknown to each other, have promiſed me one hundred pounds each of them to lie with me; to obtain which, without polluting myſelf, I adviſe you, ſir, to ſtand behind the gate with your ſword drawn, and as they come one after another, ſlay them; and ſo we ſhall have three hundred pounds without any man's knowledge. The knight anſwered, that murder ſeldom paſſed undiſcovered, and we muſt expect, if it is diſcovered, to die the moſt ſhameful death imaginable. She replied, I will begin the work; and do you proceed, and fear nothing. And at laſt her arguments prevailed with her huſband, ſo that he conſented. The appointed time being come, and one of the knights having entered the houſe and delivered his one hundred pounds, her huſband was ready to receive him, but in a fatal manner; for with a naked ſword he run him through, that he dropt down dead: The firſt being thus diſpatched, it was not long before the ſecond came, who fared no better than the firſt; and the third alſo underwent the ſame fate. Having finiſhed the butchery, they conveyed the murdered bodies into a ſecret chamber.

The murderer had a brother, who was commander of the watch of the city, and with his attendants, going his circuits, was called in by his ſiſter, telling him, that ſhe had a matter of great importance to impart to him: Upon this he ſent away his attendants, and then bid her ſpeak boldly without fear, aſſuring her he would aſſiſt to the utmoſt of his power; ſhe ſaid, Yeſterday, a knight, an acquaintance of my huſband's, coming to viſit him in a friendly manner, after ſome

words, in which the knight reflected upon me, they fell at ſuch variance, that my huſband ſlew him, whoſe body remains in the houſe unburied, and that without your aſſiſtance, we know not how to convey it away. Well, ſiſter, replied he, I will rid you of this trouble; help me to a ſack, and I will put him into it, and carry him on my back, and throw him into the river Tyber, whoſe ſtreams will quickly convey him into the ſea, ſo that you ſhall hear no more of him.

Which accordingly he did, and then returning to his ſiſter, he aſked her for ſome of her beſt wine, ſaying, He had thrown the body into the ſea, and he would engage, by that time it was carried far enough, and that it would never be found out. She pretending to go for wine, went into the next room, and haſtily, and as it were in amaze, cries out, O Lord! brother, I am undone, for the knight you carried to the river is returned. The brother aſtoniſhed at this ſtrange adventure, ſaid, Give him me again, and I will ſee if he can return any more; ſo taking the body of the ſecond knight, ſuppoſing he had been the firſt he went to the river, and with a ſtone ſunk him.

That done, he went again to his ſiſter, and ſaid, Now fill me up a glaſs of wine, for I have now ſunk him ſo deep, that he will never riſe again till the day of judgment. She hearing this, ran to fetch a bottle of wine; but haſtily, and as much affrighted, cries out, O Lord! brother, he is riſen again, and come out of the ſea. Her brother, more ſurpriſed than before, ſaid, What devil is this that I have caſt into the water twice, and yet he is come again? Deliver him to me the

third time, and I will prevent his coming again; then ſhe gave him the third knight, which he believed was the firſt, and he went without the city to a foreſt, and making a great fire, caſt him therein; and when he was almoſt burnt, he went a little diſtance to do the deed of nature; in the mean time a knight chanced to ride that way, and ſeeing a fire, and the weather being cold and raw, he drew near to it to warm himſelf; and in that poſture did the lady's brother find him when he returned, whereupon he aſked, What he was? He anſwered, I am a knight. Then ſaid the brother, Thou a knight! thou art a devil; for firſt I caſt thee into the water, then after that, with a great ſtone I ſunk thee, and the third time I put thee into the fire, ſuppoſing that thou hadſt been burnt, and yet thou ſtandeſt here. I will once again try what I can do. And thereupon he ſeized on the travelling knight, and threw him, horſe and all, into the fire, and there ſtaid till they were quite burned.

After this, he returned to his ſiſter's houſe, telling her what he had done, and how, after he had burnt him, he found him again by the fire on horſeback, and conſumed them both; and by this, the ſiſter perceived he had burnt a fourth perſon, ſhe ſeemed to admire at it; and having treated her brother with victuals and good wine, and many thanks, he departed.

After this manner ſhe ſerved ſeveral wooers, and amongſt the reſt came a little lawyer, who agreed to give her three hundred pounds for one night's lodging. At the time appointed, the lawyer came to her houſe, and delivered the money; but ſo ſoon as he attempted to take his

pleaſure with her, her huſband laid on him a luſty blow, between his neck and ſhoulders, with a large cudgel, ſo that he kicked up his heels, and went to plead his cauſe in the other world.

Then they conſulted what to do with his body, which not being wounded, her huſband took him on his back, and carried him to the lawyer's neceſſary-houſe, and ſet him on the ſeat, as if he had been there eaſing his body; thus having placed him, he left him.

The lawyer's bed-fellow knowing ſomewhat of this mighty appointment, ſat up for him, and having occaſion to go to the vault, ſaw one ſitting there, and making a near approach, perceived it was his bed-fellow, and calling him by his name, he anſwered not; he then believing that he was aſleep, pulled him by the coat, and down dropt the lawyer on the floor; and upon a little ſearch, he found that he was dead.

Our lawyer's bed-fellow upon this, ſuppoſed who had murdered him, and taking the lawyer on his back, carried him to the knight's houſe, and ſet him leaning againſt the door, and then returned home again.

Our murderers having occaſion about mid-night to go to the door, opening it, down fell the lawyer into the houſe, which ſhe perceiving, calls her huſband, and acquaints him with the buſineſs; Upon this he was as much troubled as his wife; but knowing there was a neceſſity to do ſomewhat, reſolves to carry the body and throw it into the river. And as he walked along the ſtreet he heard a noiſe of people walking and talking, whom, by their diſcourſe, he perceived were ſhop-lifters, or houſe breakers, and that they had met

with a prize, which they had in a ſack, ſo reſolved to leave it under a ſtall, and retire to a tavern to drink. Our murderer, who hid himſelf that they might not ſee him, perceiving they were gone, came to the place, and finding a ſack that had two flitches of bacon in it, he took them out of the ſack, and put the dead lawyer in it, and placing it under the ſtall, went home ladened with the flitches of bacon. His wife ſeeing him come home with ſomething on his back, was affrighted, thinking he had brought back the body of the lawyer; but he getting in a doors, undeceived her, ſhewing her the bacon, and acquainting her with all that had happened; ſhe underſtanding that they were enriched with another prize, went to bed well pleaſed that evening.

The rogues that had ſtole the bacon having drank too long, they had not money enough to pay the reckoning; ſo they told the landlord, that if he would buy ſome bacon of them, they would enlarge the reckoning; the landlord told them, he would give them the market price with all his heart; whereupon, one goes and fetches it, and ſetting down the load, they opened the ſack, but inſtead of bacon, the lawyer's head appears. This amazed them all, but eſpecially the landlord, who cried out, they had murdered ſome neighbour. They knew not what to ſay, but deſired the landlord to be patient, and they would tell him the whole ſtory; ſo related to him how they had it in ſuch a place, a chandler's backhouſe, which indeed they had plundered, and thither they would carry it back again. The vintner thinking that he might come into trouble, and perhaps be counted a party concerned, was

contented; ſo they carried the ſack to the corn-chandler's houſe, and left it where they found it.

The chandler that morning calling up his ſervant, to carry corn to the mill to be ground; the ſervant had a mind to a breakfaſt, and a raſher of bacon was what he deſired; ſo going to cut a raſher, and opening the ſack, he got hold of the lawyer's head, which ſo affrighted him, that he cried out. His maſter coming to know the matter, he ſhewed him what he had got; the maſter concluded that they had took the bacon, and left the dead man; and to be rid of him, they agreed that he ſhould carry him towards the mill, and by the way drop or bury him. The ſervant conſented to what the maſter ſaid; but falling into company that went the ſame way, had not the opportunity; ſo being come to the mill, he hunted for a place where to put the dead body, and eſpying ſack loads of corn of the miller's, going to market in a cart, and it being dark, the chandler's man took the ſack wherein the lawyer was, and ſhifted it out with meal, ſo made an exchange, and laid the ſack with the lawyer and meal on the cart, taking the other ſack, and laying it on his own horſe, and ſo returned home.

And now our dead lawyer is on the miller's cart, and carried to market; which being expoſed to ſale, who ſhould come to buy meal, but the knight and his lady, that had killed the lawyer.

The woman opens a ſack of meal, and buys it, but wanting another ſack, the miller told her, the next to it was the ſame for quality and goodneſs; but ſhe would ſee it; whereupon, putting in her hand to draw out ſome meal, ſhe caught hold of the lawyer's hair, ſhe upon this, tells the miller

he designed to cheat her with some worse commodities than meal; wherefore, to be sure, some of the meal being taken out, and the lawyer's head appearing, she cried out, O Lord! husband, the lawyer you killed, is come again. This saying was taken notice of, and they were had before a magistrate, where they confessed the fact, as also the murder of the three knights, for which they were sentenced to die, and were accordingly executed.

MORAL.

By this we may learn what strange creatures some women are. This woman seemed to value and preserve her chastity, yet she was guilty of a greater crime, murder; therefore we ought not to give credit to some peoples pretences to virtue, for they may be guilty of some vice that exceeds it. Whereupon the emperor replied, My son shall not die this day. The master gave him thanks, and took his leave, and departed.

HISTORY XX.

The Empress induceth the Emperor to execute Diocletian, by a story of a king that gave away his own wife to his steward unwittingly, by giving way to jealousy.

WHEN the empress heard that the prince was still living, she began to rave like one dis-

tracted, crying, What shall I do? unhappy woman that I am! I cannot survive the shame that is done me with impunity, therefore I will destroy myself. God forbid, said the emperor, that you should think of such a wicked action; have a little patience, and you shall have justice done you. You have promised me so, answered the empress, many times, and yet I am not avenged; therefore it will certainly happen to you, as it did to a king and his steward. The emperor desiring to hear that example, she said, It will signify nothing, for to-morrow the seventh master will plead for your son, and save him from death, as the other six have done; and you hearing your son speak, will be so ravished therewith, that all the love you had for me will be forgotten. That is impossible, said the emperor; therefore, my dear, harbour no such thoughts. Then, my lord, said she, I will relate the story to you; perhaps it may preserve both you and me from destruction. The emperor bidding her proceed, she began as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was a certain king that loved his wife to that degree, that he grew jealous of her, and inclosed her into a fair and stately castle. About the same time a valiant knight, that lived in a far country, dreamed he saw one of the fairest queens that ever eyes beheld, by whose means he could arrive at great honours.

This dream made such an impression upon his fancy, that he was very confident that he should

know the lady again that he dreamed of, if ever he ſhould ſee her. Alſo, the ſame night the queen dreamed of the knight, and yet they were altogether ſtrangers to each other.

The knight, upon the viſion, determined to travel until he found her out; and after he had travelled through divers regions, at laſt he came into the city where the queen was kept in a ſtrong caſtle by her jealous huſband.

The knight one day walking near the caſtle where the queen was kept, by chance ſhe looked out of a window and eſpied him, whom ſhe immediately recollected ſhe had ſeen in her dream. The knight alſo by chance lifting up his eyes, perceived a lady at the window, whom his mind gave him was ſhe of whom he had dreamed; whereupon he often walked about the caſtle, which ſhe perceiving, writ a letter, and ſecretly dropt it from the caſement of her chamber window; and he having peruſed it fully, underſtood the lady's mind, ſo waited for an opportunity to get into her apartment.

This gentleman in a little time, grew famous at tilt and tournament, wherein he performed ſuch valiant actions, that the fame thereof reached the king's ear, who ſent for the knight, and conferred great honours upon him, and conſtituted one of his privy council, and was ſo taken with his perſon and converſation, that he gave him leave to build an apartment near the walls of the caſtle, that he might be always near at hand to attend upon his majeſty, in caſe of need.

The knight employed many workmen on this occaſion, and having finiſhed the work, he agreed with one of the moſt ingenious workmen, to make

him a private door into the queen's lodging, and when he had done, he rewarded the workman largely, and ſent him privately away into another country, becauſe he ſhould not make it known. After which, going into the queen's apartment, he paid his reſpects to her; and then they diſcourſed of many things, particularly of the wonderful means they came acquainted by, each informing the other of their dreams, to their no ſmall admiration. The night approaching, he beſought the queen to let him ſleep by her till the morning, and after ſome denial, for cuſtom ſake, ſhe conſented.

In the morning the knight returned to his lodging, having given the queen ſatisfaction to her heart's content. After this, the queen's coyneſs entirely vaniſhed, and the knight went and enjoyed her as often as he pleaſed, and as a token of her love to him, ſhe gave him her wedding ring. The king on the other hand, little dreaming of the knight's treachery, made him comptroller of his houſe, and general of his forces.

It happened one day that the king was diſpoſed to ride a hunting, ſo he immediately ſends for his general to accompany him; and having ſpent the day in chaſing wild beaſts, they were ſo weary that the king ſat down by a fountain to reſt; and the general ſitting next the king, fell aſleep with the ring upon his finger, that the queen had given him; the king perceiving it, knew it well. When the general awaked, and believing that the king had ſeen the ring, he pretended to be very ſick, and ſaid, My honoured lord, I find myſelf ſo ſick that if I do not make haſte to my lodging, and procure a preſent remedy, I am a dead man;

therefore I deſire leave to go home. The king anſwered, Go my dear friend, in the name of God, and ſee there be nothing wanting to procure thy health, that my court or kingdom can afford.

The general accordingly took leave of the king, and rode to his lodging, and from thence hattened to the queen, and gave her the ring again, telling her how the king, he believed, had ſeen it on his finger as he was aſleep, and that he was forced to feign himſelf very ſick to get a pretence to return to her with the ring, that ſhe might have it ready to ſhew the king, if he ſhould enquire after it; and then he took his leave of her and returned to his lodging.

Not long after the king came to viſit the queen, and ſhe received him very affectionately, as uſual, and after a little talk, the king ſaid, My dear, let me ſee your wedding ring, for I have a great deſire to ſee it; ſhe anſwered, My beſt beloved, why do you deſire to ſee it? He replied, It is my pleaſure, therefore ſhew it me preſently. Then ſhe went to her cabinet, and taking out the ring, brought it to her huſband, and when he had viewed it, he was half aſhamed, and ſaid, My dear pardon my unkind ſuſpicion, for I verily thought I had ſeen the ring upon my general's finger; ſhe anſwered, My lord, one ring may be like another, and workmen ſeldom make one piece of work, but another is able to do the ſame: But however, I pray God forgive you for ſuſpecting me: You know the ſtrength of the tower, and keep the keys yourſelf, and therefore can have no juſt cauſe to do it, though I were ever ſo ill inclined, as God is my witneſs, I am not.

Not long after, the general made a great feaſt,

and invited the king to dine with him, ſaying, My honoured lord, a lady who is my love, being come from my native country to live with me in your majeſty's dominions: I have made a feaſt, and humbly beg that your majeſty will honour me with your royal preſence this day at dinner. The king readily complying with his requeſt, the general went to the queen the ſecret way, and ſaid, My dear lady, I beſeech you to come into my apartment this way, and dreſs yourſelf richly in jewels and ornaments, after the cuſtom of my country; for I have invited the king to dine with me, pretending that my love is come from my own country, to live with me; and I would have you ſit at table, and entertain the king, in quality of my elected ſpouſe. The queen anſwered, She was ready to act according to his deſire, and ſo apparelled herſelf after the cuſtom of the general's country. And the king ſoon after arriving, ſhe received him with the greateſt gallantry and complaiſance imaginable; and the king on the other hand, welcomed her into his territories, and praiſing her beauty and deportment, he ſat down at the table, and made the diſguiſed queen ſit next. At ſeveral times, nevertheleſs, it entered into the king's thoughts that this was his wife, as indeed it was, but by reaſon of her ſtrange habit and deportment, ſhe remained undiſcovered; and when the dinner was over, and the diſhes taken away, the general deſired the lady to ſing before the king. accordingly ſhe ſung a love ſong, which amazed the king the more, ſaying to himſelf, Sure this muſt be my queen! But how can it be, when I have the keys of the tower in my own cuſtody?

And thus was the king divided in his thoughts, till at length, being no longer able to contain himſelf he ordered the general to take away the table, ſaying, Something troubled his mind, and he muſt begone, the general officiouſly deſired to know if he could adminiſter any conſolation to his majeſty, and what it was that diſturbed him? The lady alſo ſeemed troubled, and ſaid, If your majeſty will pleaſe to continue here, we will order a maſquerade, and make it our ſtudy to divert your mind, and give your majeſty all the delight and diverſion this place can afford. This rather adding to the king's ſuſpicion and diſpleaſure, he angrily ſaid, Take away the table, for I can continue here no longer, till I have reſolved my mind. Then the general inſtantly obeyed the king, and returned him thanks for the honour he had done him.

The king going away, immediately went into the caſtle, to ſee whether his queen was there or no; but in the mean time, ſhe went in at the private door, and ſtripping off her uppermoſt veſture, and putting herſelf into the ſame habit that he left her attired with. When the king found her there, and in the ſame dreſs he had left her in before, contrary to expectation, he kindly embraced her, and ſaid, My general having made a feaſt for joy of the arrival of his lady, who came from her own country to my court after him, he invited me to honour him with my preſence at dinner, which I did; and when I came there, and beheld the lady, ſhe ſeemed ſo much like you in perſon, behaviour, ſtature and ſpeech, that I could hardly have patience to the end of the feaſt, to ſee whither you were here or not; My lord, re-

plied the queen, Why do you entertain ſuch jealouſies of my virtue? what reaſon have you to ſuſpect me? the tower is ſo ſtrong that you know there is no entering it, and you keep the keys yourſelf, ſo that it is impoſſible to deceive you, if I were leſs virtuous than I am, or were inclinable to be vicious. You may remember, my lord, continued ſhe, in ſome ſeeming paſſion, that you ſuſpected me becauſe your general had a ring like that you gave me and do you ſtill continue to ſuſpect me? is it not ſufficient to debar me from my liberty, but you muſt needs be jealous beſides? Therefore I tell you, my lord, if you do not forſake your jealouſy, and releaſe me from this confinement before three days are expired, I will end my days here; the king anſwered, My dear lady, your complaint is juſt, and I own myſelf guilty; but let me beg your patience for a few days, and upon the word of a prince, you ſhall be ſet at liberty; and after a loving ſalute, he took his leave of her.

Before two days were at an end, the general came to the king, and ſaid, My lord, I have ſerved your majeſty ſome time, and I have now thoughts of returning to my native country; and one favor I beg of your majeſty, that you will be pleaſed to beſtow your female ſervant upon your male; and I ſhall boaſt of the honour your majeſty will do thereby, ſo long as I live. The king immediately granted his requeſt, and told him, If he required much greater favors than that, he would grant them.

The appointed day of marriage being come, the king attended by his principal nobility, and dreſſed in his royal robes, went to the church,

where the prieſt was ready to ſolemnize the nuptials. The queen by this time, being dreſſed in the knight's lodging, after the manner of his country, was led by two noblemen to the church, when the prieſt demanded who ſhall give this lady to that knight? the king anſwered, I will give her to him freely. So taking her by the hand, he put the queen's hand into the hand of his general; and the prieſt, after the orders of the church, united them in the bands of wedlock. When all the rites were ſolemnized, the general ſaid to the king, My lord, the ſhip that I intend to go with into my native country, is now ready to ſail, therefore I humbly beſeech your majeſty to accompany my ſpouſe thereto, and admoniſh her to love and honour me, as ſhe is obliged, and I queſtion not but I ſhall find her very regardful of your majeſty's admonitions and commands. The king readily agreed to his requeſt, and with his nobility accompanied them to the ſhip. Then the king addreſſing himſelf to the queen, ſaid, My dear friend, hearken to my counſel, I beſeech you, and it will turn to your advantage. My dear friend has now married you, and done you the greateſt honour that he is capable of, wherefore obſerve, I beſeech you, that you love, honour, and obey him above all men, and that you be faithful to him according to your matrimonial contract. And then the king ſaluted her, and delivered her to his general, ſaying, My bleſſing be with you both, and the Lord keep and conduct you ſafe to your own country.

The general and his lady bowed to the king, and gave him thanks for all the favors that he had

heaped upon them, and ſo committing them to the Almighty, they entered into the ſhip.

The mariners hoiſted ſail before the wind, and in a ſhort ſpace the king loſt ſight of the ſhip; and then, with his attendants, he returned to his caſtle, and immediately went to his tower, and having unlocked the door, and ſearched up and down, at laſt he eſpied the private door, ſo he gueſſed how he was deceived; whereupon he fell into deſpair, and a diſeaſe ſeized him that took him off.

MORAL.

'My lord, you find what confidence the king had in his general, and yet he deceived him of his queen. You put the ſame confidence in your wife maſters, who endeavour to deſtroy me your wife, and you alſo. You ſee with your own eyes how your ſon hath abuſed me, and yet you ſuffer them to defend him in it, and inſult me with impunity. Therefore I fear it will happen to you, worſe than it did to the king I have ſpoken of.'

The emperor ſaid, For this example's ſake, to-morrow my ſon ſhall die.

HISTORY XXI.

Eraſtus, the ſeventh wiſe maſter, ſtops the execution of Diocleſian, by the ſtory of an Epheſian matron; ſhewing what great love ſhe pretended to have for her huſband, and how barbarouſly ſhe uſed him when he was dead, to get another.

THE next day the emperor commanded his ſon to be led to execution; whereupon Eraſtus, the ſeventh wiſe maſter, haſtened to the emperor's court, and there before his majeſty, he bowed reverently, according to his duty.

But the emperor with great indignation, ſaid, You have ſent my ſon home lewd and dumb, whereas you had him from me innocent and dutiful; and for this reaſon you and your companions, with my rebellious ſon, ſhall ſurely die.

The maſter anſwered, Moſt noble emperor, the time is not long betwixt this and to-morrow noon, and then, by the grace of God, you ſhall hear him ſpeak, and declare the truth of all things, to your majeſty's ſatisfaction; but if he do not, then take his life, and the lives of us all.

The emperor ſaid, If I could but hear my ſon ſpeak, and prove his innocence, I would not deſire to live longer; the maſter anſwered, This you will certainly hear, if you will but ſtay this little time, and the debate betwixt the empreſs and us, will then be juſtly decided; but if you ſuffer him to be put to death, through the words of your wife, it will happen to you worſe than it did to the knight that died for a little blood

which he ſaw his wife ſhed; to whoſe corps afterwards ſhe was moſt unnatural.

The emperor ſaid, Pray let me hear that ſtory: The maſter anſwered, Let your ſon be called back again, and I will give your majeſty ſuch an example, as you ſhall remember all your life, of the wretched folly and imbecillity of female nature.

The emperor replied, I will again ſuſpend the execution of my ſon, upon condition, that tomorrow I hear him ſpeak as you have promiſed; the maſter ſaid, Do that my lord, for it ſhall certainly be ſo. And then he began his ſtory as followeth.

EXAMPLE.

THERE was a knight that married a beautiful lady, whom he loved entirely. It happened one day, that this knight and his lady playing a game at cheſs, ſhe by chance ſtruck her hand, and made it bleed a little, at the ſight of which her huſband fell to the ground in a ſwoon; his wife ſeeing that, caſt cold water upon his face, and he came a little to himſelf, but the fright ſo ſurpriſed him, that he died immediately, to the unſpeakable grief of his wife; who after his funeral obſequies were performed, reſolved that it ſhould not be long ere her ſpirit ſhould be remitted to regain that content in the other world, which had been raviſhed from her in this; and to perfect this reſolution, ſhe made a vow, That ſhe would never depart from the grave of her huſband, but as a turtle-dove, for the love of him, live and die there.

Her friends could by no means alter her reſo-

lution; whereupon they built her a little house near the grave, and providing it with all things necessary, left her there, thinking that in some little time she would be weary of being alone, and so return again to her relations.

In the city was a law, that if an offender was hanged, the sheriff all night should watch the dead body, and if he let the body be stolen, the sheriff should lose his life, and forfeit his estate. It happened a short time after the knight was dead, that a notorious malefactor was hanged for a robbery, so the sheriff was obliged to watch the body, and it being in the winter, and the weather very cold, he was almost frozen to death; but looking about him, perceived a smoke to ascend from a little house in the church-yard, to which he went in haste, and knocked at the door; the mournful lady asked, who was there? The sheriff replied, I am the sheriff that has endured so much cold, that I am almost starved to death, and must certainly perish, unless you pity my condition, and suffer me to warm myself; she said, I fear if I should let you in, you will be talking of my misfortune, and aggravate my affliction; but he answered, For God's sake, dear madam, let me warm myself, and I will say nothing that shall afflict or disturb you.

Then she let him in, and when he had warmed himself, he said, Dear madam, I would, with your permission, speak one word to you, she answered, Sir, say what you please; then he said to her, Madam, you are a beautiful lady, in the prime of your youth, were it not more convenient for you to dwell at home, than to waste yourself here with sorrow and weeping; she said, Sir, if you did

but know the occaſion, you would alter your opinion; and then related the ſtory to him. Madam, ſaid he, I am very ſorry for your misfortune; and then he gave her thanks for the benefit of her fire, and returned to the gallows, admiring the gratitude and love of the forlorn widow to her deceaſed huſband; but to his amazement, he found the thief was ſtolen away, whereupon he cried out bitterly, Wo, wo is me! What ſhall I do, for my life and eſtate are forfeited to the king? And being diſtracted with horror, he returns to the widow, beats his breaſt, and tears his hair, ſtamps on the ground, and uſes all the jeſtures of a diſtracted perſon; whereupon the poor widow perceiving the affliction he laboured under, aſked him the occaſion of all this lamentation.

Madam, ſays he, I ſuppoſe you are not ignorant what the laws of the city are, that when any man is hanged, and ſtolen from the gallows, the ſheriff's life and goods are in the king's hands. Now it happened while I was here, and warmed me, the thief was ſtolen away; and therefore, for the love of God, give me your advice upon this weighty occaſion.

She perceiving that he was a likely handſome man, anſwered, Forbear weeping, and follow my advice, and all ſhall be well; he deſired her to proceed; ſays ſhe, In the firſt place, you muſt promiſe me marriage; he replied, That would be the greateſt pleaſure in the world to him, next to preſerving his life.

Then ſhe vowed in the preſence of God, that ſhe accepted him for a huſband; and he vowed the ſame to accept of her for a wife; Well, now ſir, ſays ſhe, We muſt take my huſband out of the

grave, who, God help me, died for love of me, and hang him upon the gallows instead of the thief; for now he is dead, that's all he is good for.

The sheriff approving of the proposition, went and opened the sepulchre, and drew him out: but says he, Madam, what shall we do now? For the thief had two of his teeth beat out, and I fear that may cause a discovery. Upon this, without any hesitation, she replied, Take a stone and beat out two of his teeth: the sheriff replied, I have not a heart to do it, the compassion of my nature is so great.

She readily answered, He was a tender and kind husband unto me, but yet you shall see I can do this for the love of you. Then she presently took a stone and beat out two of his teeth, and bid him hang him up instead of the thief.

Alas! said the sheriff, What shall we do now? the thief when taken, was wounded, and lost both his ears; then said she, Lend me your knife, and you shall see what I can do for the love of you; and then she cut off both his ears, and said now hang him up.

The sheriff said, I fear to hang him up yet, for the thief was gelt: the widow answered, I never met with such a fearful hen-hearted man as you are, to be so conscientious and timorous, when the matter may so easily be done, take a knife and castrate him; the sheriff said, I desire to be excused, for I cannot so inhumanely mangle the body of any person, though it were to save my life. He was, says she, The very best of husbands to me, and yet for the love of you, you shall see that I am not afraid to do it.

Then taking the knife, she without any re-

that he so ordered the seven animals and their love, which all the time had made no defence, that they seemed to be at the last gasp for their lives; and yet, nevertheless, the dove appeared with so good a grace, that without fighting, he overcame the serpent. Upon this, the emperor then seemed to have so much hatred against the serpent, as he had formerly love for it, very much repenting that he had so persecuted the dove, at the desire of so horrible a beast as was the serpent. He did also thought, that all the city of Rome made bonfires for the deliverance and victory of the dove; so that nothing was heard through the whole city but rejoicings.

In the conclusion, the noise which the people made at these bonfires awakened the emperor, and then he began to consider of his dream, but could not then comprehend the meaning of it; but it left a lasting impression upon his mind. With these thoughts he arose, and after him the empress, to whom every minute seemed to be a year, so desirous was she to be satisfied in the death of the innocent Diocletian, and the seven wise masters, who took his part, to maintain the just quarrel of their disciple.

HISTORY XXII.

How Diocletian, the Emperor's son, complained of the Empress, and defended himself.

THE term of days being expired, in which the prince was to speak, he sent to the emperor

to desire audience of his majesty, that he might vindicate himself from the aspersion cast upon him by the empress.

The emperor was overjoyed to hear that his son spake, and ordered him to be brought before him, which was done. He appeared cloathed in purple, and cloth of gold, his masters going with him, one on his right hand, and another on his left, and the other five following, with twelve men playing before him on musical instruments. And being come to the emperor's palace, the senators and nobility were sent for, to hear what defence Diocletian would make for himself. The concourse of people were very numerous on that occasion, and after silence was proclaimed, the prince said, O my dear lord, before I defend myself, I beseech you to order the empress, with all her maids of honour, to be present; the emperor accordingly sent for the empress without delay, who, with her ladies, appeared accordingly.

Then said the prince, I desire that they would be pleased to stand in a row, that I may see them; when this was done, My lords, says the prince, Behold the chamber-maid that standeth there in green, who is known to be the empress's particular favourite, command her to be unclothed before us all, that we may see what she is; the emperor answered, That would be shame to the company, to have a naked woman standing before us; the prince replied, If it be a woman, it is my shame; if not, the shame will be upon the empress. When he was unclothed, he appeared to be a man, to the astonishment of all present.

Then the prince said to his father, Behold my lord, this adulterer hath many nights lain with

your wife, and defiled your bed; and him the empreſs loved above all your other ſervants, which thing you did not know.

And hereupon the emperor flew in a great paſſion, like one that was horn-mad, and immediately ordered that they ſhould be burnt. But the prince ſaid, I beſeech your majeſty to defer the ſentence till I have made my innocence appear, and have cleared myſelf of all the crimes ſhe has alledged againſt me; then ſaid the emperor, My dear ſon, I commit all judgment into your hands, do as you ſee proper; and then the prince proceeded to defend himſelf in the following words.

The Speech of Prince Diocleſian.

WHEN your imperial majeſty was pleaſed to ſend for me, at the empreſs's earneſt requeſt, then I with my maſters conſulted the ſtars, by which I perceived, that if I ſhould ſpeak to you, or any perſon living, within the ſpace of ſeven days, I ſhould die a moſt ſhameful death; and for that cauſe only did I forbear to ſpeak till now. And whereas, the empreſs hath moſt unjuſtly accuſed me, that I would have ravished her, it is a moſt groſs ſcandal and falſity, for ſhe moſt inceſtuouſly endeavoured to provoke me to defile your bed; and when ſhe could not obtain her deſire, (her own hand-writing will make my aſſeveration appear) ſhe took pen, ink, and paper, and deſired me to write whether I would conſent or not; I anſwered her by writing, that I would by no means conſent to defile my father's bed; upon this ſhe began to tear her clothes, and ſcratch her

visage till she bled, and cried out, that I would have forced her, and that I had most unhumanely torn her flesh.

When the emperor heard this, he beheld her with the utmost indignation, and said, O wicked woman! was not thy concealed adultery sufficient to satisfy thy lecherous appetite, but thou must endeavour to debauch my son.

The empress fell at the emperor's feet, and implored mercy; but the emperor said, O thou cursed and unhappy woman! thou art not worthy to receive any mercy, for thou hast deserved for to die in three respects: *First*, In that thou hast committed adultery. *Secondly*, In that thou most lasciviously hast provoked my son to a most abominable sin, and laid the crime falsly and unjustly upon him. *Thirdly* and *lastly*, In that thou hast every day incited me by thy false tales, to put my son to death; therefore the law shall have its course against thee, and thou shalt suffer according to thy deserts.

Diocletian then said to the emperor, Most honoured father, you have been often told by the empress that I would dethrone you by the assistance of my masters; whereas I solemnly declare they never taught me any thing, but unlimited passive obedience to your majesty's pleasure; nor have I ever meditated any thing, but how I might become useful and serviceable to your majesty's sacred person, which I shall continue to do, and earnestly desire that God would continue your majesty's life for a multitude of years, and it shall be my constant endeavour to make your crown sit easy upon yourself, while you shall have all the glory; and give me leave to say, honoured

your wife, and defiled your bed, and him the empress loved above all your other servants, which thing you did not know.

And hereupon the emperor flew in a great passion, like one that was horn-mad, and immediately ordered that they should be burnt. But the prince said, I beseech your majesty to defer the sentence till I have made my innocence appear, and have cleared myself of all the crimes she has alledged against me; then said the emperor, My dear son, I commit all judgment into your hands, do as you see proper; and then the prince proceeded to defend himself in the following words.

The Speech of Prince Dioclesian.

WHEN your imperial majesty was pleased to send for me, at the empress's earnest request, then I with my masters consulted the stars, by which I perceived, that if I should speak to you, or any person living, within the space of seven days, I should die a most shameful death; and for that cause only did I forbear to speak till now. And whereas, the empress hath most unjustly accused me, that I would have ravished her, it is a most gross scandal and falsity, for she most incestuously endeavoured to provoke me to defile your bed; and when she could not obtain her desire, (her own hand-writing will make my asseveration appear) she took pen, ink, and paper, and desired me to write whether I would consent or not; I assured her by writing, that I would by no means consent to defile my father's bed; upon this she began to tear her clothes, and scratch her

It happened upon a day, as the nobleman and his lady and son were sitting at supper, a nightingale sat upon a tree before the window, and began to sing so sweetly, that the nobleman was ravished with the harmony, and said, What would I give to understand the meaning of her song? If you are desirous to know that, says the son, I can give you that satisfaction. The warbling of the nightingale, respects my future grandeur; signifying, that I shall become a great prince, and honoured of all men, and that my father shall bring the water to wash my hands, and my mother shall hold the towel.

The father was enraged at this interpretation, and said, This augury shall never take effect; and so took his son and threw him into the sea, saying, Lie there interpreter. The youth being able to swim, with much ado got to land; and after he had been four days without meat or drink, on the fifth day a ship coming by, he hailed the mariners, and desired them for the love of God to preserve his life; the mariners seeing a fair young man had compassion on him, and sent out the long-boat to fetch him on board; and carrying him into Egypt, sold him to a duke, who finding him to be faithful, ingenious, and very beautiful, took a great liking to him.

Upon this time the king of the realm was in great trouble, and this was his affliction; that as often as he went out of the palace, three crows would present themselves before him, crying out with such terrible voices, that he was almost distracted; and being very desirous of being released, he caused a proclamation to be issued throughout his kingdom, that if any one could remedy the croak of the crows, he would give him his daugh-

ter to be his wife, and make him his successor in his kingdom.

Alexander hearing this, acquainted the duke, That he would engage his life, that he gave the meaning, and would rid the king of the nuisance. Upon this, the duke told the king, that he had brought a young man that could deliver him from the trouble of the crows. The king then promised the young man upon his royal word, that he would perform the promise of his proclamation. Then Alexander said, My lord, there were two crows, a male and a female, who brought forth a young one, and being in a country where was a great famine, the female left the young raven to shift for itself; the male with great difficulty and labour provided for the young one during the famine; and when it was over, the female returned, and would needs accompany the young one, which the male would not permit, alledging her unnaturalness during the time of the famine; and this being the debate, they are come to you, that by your royal authority you would be pleased to put an end to their difference, by your definitive sentence; assuring you sir, that so soon as you shall pronounce sentence, they will be gone, and trouble you no farther.

Then said the king aloud, Because the young raven was sustained by the male in its necessity, therefore I adjudge, That the young raven shall continue with the male, and not with the female. When the ravens heard this sentence, they flew away, without ever returning again, to the great wonder of all the spectators.

This done, the king ran and embraced young Alexander, and owned him for his son, promising

him his daughter and his kingdom after his deceaſe. And from that time young Alexander lived with the king, and was beloved and admired both for his gallant deportment and valour, eſpecially at the exerciſe of tilt and tournament, wherein he always won the prize; ſo that in all Egypt his equal was not to be found, neither could the hardeſt queſtion be put to him, but he would give the true ſolution thereof.

At that time there was an emperor, named Titus, who excelled in magnificence and politeneſs of all other emperors, kings and princes in the world, ſo that many lords and princes of foreign nations reſorted thither, who deſired to be accompliſhed. Alexander hearing the fame of this emperor, deſired leave to travel to his court. The king granted his requeſt, but adviſed him to ſtay till honourable proviſion was made for him, that he might appear in an equipage befitting the ſon of a king; and that before he went, he would perform what at firſt he intended to marry his daughter.

To which Alexander anſwered, If your majeſty think fit, I will defer the conſummation of our nuptials till my return; when I hope I ſhall bring ſo good a fame with me, as may in part merit the illuſtrious title of your ſon-in-law, and thereby render me more acceptable to your daughter for her huſband. The king conſenting to this, Alexander took with him a magnificent equipage, and went to the emperor's court.

When he was arrived there, he paid his reſpects to the emperor, and ſaid, If it pleaſe your imperial majeſty, I am ſon and heir to the king of Egypt, and am come to ſerve your majeſty, if it

please you to accept of me; the emperor replied, He was heartily welcome, and made him his carver. And Alexander behaved himself so well, that he was beloved by all the court.

And soon after came the French king's son named Lodowick, to serve the emperor, and to learn courtly and genteel behaviour. The emperor received him honourably, and made him his cup-bearer; and those two princes were so like one another, that they could hardly be distinguished, as their persons were alike, so was their love to each other.

The emperor had only one daughter, named Florentia, who was very beautiful, and the heiress of his empire; and although she kept a court by herself, yet every day the emperor sent her a dish from his own table. Alexander being the bearer of this dish of meat, the princess was so much pleased with his gallantry and good behaviour, that she began to be in love with him.

Upon a day, Alexander happened to be absent, and Lodowick supplied his place; and having seen the princess, he was so smitten, that immediately he fell in love with her. She perceiving it was not Alexander, demanded his name and quality? He answered, he was the king's son of France, and his name was Lodowick; and then having performed his office, he with a profound respect retired.

At night, Lodowick being very sick, Alexander demanded the cause; he answered, he was very sick, but knew not what ailed him. Alexander viewing him well, said, The cause of your distemper I know full well; for to-day, when you carried the meat to emperor's daughter, you beheld her

ſo fervently, that her beauty has wounded your heart; he anſwered, Ah! Alexander, all the phyſicians in the world could not more truly have judged the cauſe of my diſtemper; but I fear it will be my death; Alexander replied, My dear friend do not deſpair, for I will aſſiſt you to the utmoſt of my power.

The next morning Alexander went to a jeweller, and bought a rich jewel unknown to Lodowick, and preſenting it to the princeſs, he ſaid, Madam, the ſon of the moſt Chriſtian king of France, having beheld your princely beauty, is taken ſick even to death, and deſired me to preſent this to your highneſs in his name, beſeeching you to accept of it as a token of love; the princeſs in a great paſſion replied, Would you have me to encourage the love of any perſon without the conſent and direction of my father? No, I will not, and you may aſſure yourſelf that you ſhall never receive any thanks for your meſſage; and I would have you never propoſe the like to me, as you value my reſentment.

Alexander hearing this, making a low obeiſance, retired; and the next day went to the jeweller, and bought more jewels of greater value, and preſented them to the princeſs in the name of Lodowick. When ſhe ſaw this noble preſent, fixing her eyes on Alexander, ſhe ſaid, I wonder that you have ſo often ſeen and ſpoke to me, and yet have never done your own errand, to ſpeak for yourſelf, but for another; he anſwered, Madam, my birth is not to be compared to your highneſs's, and beſides I never was yet wounded with the love of any body, but the daughter of the king of Egypt, to whom I am betrothed;

And as I am united in the bonds of friendſhip with the prince of France, and know that his birth and quality is royal in all reſpects, I think myſelf obliged to do him all the ſervices in my power; and therefore now I beſeech your imperial highneſs to have compaſſion on him, and grant him a return in affection, leſt he die for the love of you, and it be for ever laid to your cruelty; ſhe anſwered, Go your ways; for at this time I will give you no anſwer.

Alexander accordingly departed, and on the third day he made another viſit, preſenting her with a girdle that was beſet with diamonds, which was of more value than both the other preſents, and offered it to her in the name of Lodowick. The princeſs being conquered at the ſight of ſuch a preſent, ſaid to Alexander, Tell Lodowick that if he come to my chamber about eleven at night, he ſhall find the door open. Alexander overjoyed, took his leave of the princeſs, and went to Lodowick, and ſaid, My dear friend be chearful, for I have conquered the princeſs for you, and this night at eleven o'clock you will have admittance into her chamber.

When Lodowick heard this, overjoyed at the news, he ſtarted up as though he had awaked out of his ſleep, and was ſo well, that he went at the time appointed with Alexander to the chamber of the princeſs, who received him very kindly, and from that time ſhe ſo admired him, that he had freedom to be with her, when, and as often as he pleaſed.

Lodowick made the beſt uſe of this opportunity, and viſited her ſo often, that in proceſs of time it came to the ears of the lords and gentlemen of

the court, who conspired among themselves how they might intrap him with the princess; which Alexander understanding, he often frustrated and disappointed their contrivances by his vigilance and valour.

The case stood thus when letters came to Alexander of the death of the king of Egypt, desiring his return to take possession of the kingdom; this news he declared to Lodowick and the princess, and then to the emperor; but withal acquainting his imperial majesty, That if he required it he was ready to quit his realm to serve him still; the emperor answered, He was very sorrowful for his departure, but that it did not become him, or any generous prince to hinder the advancement of his servants, but rather to prefer them. He therefore readily consented that he should go; and then congratulated him upon his accession to his throne; and after this, he took his leave of the whole court, most of which were troubled for his departure; for he was very much beloved.

Lodowick and the princess Florentina, by the emperor's free consent, accompanied Alexander seven miles, and then after strict embraces, and a solemn though sorrowful farewel, these friends and lovers separated: Alexander having first given Lodowick and the princess a caution, lest any coming in his room, should discover their amours, and betray them, which might tend to the hazard of their lives and reputations; Lodowick answered, Never fear, dear friend, but I will take all the care imaginable; and then taking a ring from his finger, he gave it to Alexander to keep him in remembrance of the great love and friendship he had for

him; Alexander replied, At your request I will receive the ring; but it is impossible to forget you, if I had no other remembrance but our former happy friendship. And then committing them to God, he embraced them both, and continued his journey for Egypt.

Not long after the king of Spain's son, named Guido, was received by the emperor in the room of Alexander, and was assigned Alexander's apartment; who perceiving Lodowick was displeased at his being in Alexander's chamber, conceived a mortal hatred against him, which obliged Lodowick to be cautious and secret in his visits to the princess; but Guido being in the same apartment with Lodowick, he could not conceal the matter so closely, but it was observed by Guido, who indeed had a design on the princess himself; but perceiving the favor she shewed to Lodowick, and guessing how he came acquainted with her, he waited only for an opportunity to be revenged on them both.

Nor was it long before an opportunity presented to shew his malice; for as the emperor was one day praising Alexander's valour, wisdom, and good humour; Guido said, My lord, he is not worthy of those commendations you bestow upon him; for he hath been a traitor in your house. The emperor surprised at this, hastily said, Tell me how? Guido answered, You have but one only daughter, and Lodowick hath defiled her, and goeth to her as often as he pleaseth. The emperor, much incensed at this intelligence, in a great passion sent for Lodowick, and told him what he was accused of, assuring him that if it were proved, he should die a shameful death.

Lodowick pleaded innocency, and offered to prove it in a battle againſt his accuſer; to which Guido conſenting, the emperor aſſigned them the day of combat.

This was very unpleaſant to prince Lodowick, but much more to the princeſs, when he acquainted her therewith; but they ſeeing how their affairs ſtood, adviſed how to prevent the danger; for Guido was a valiant man, and Lodowick had but little ſkill in arms, and therefore they conſulted what to do. Their reſult was this, ſhe adviſed Lodowick with all ſpeed to tell the emperor that he had received letters from the king his father, that he was ſick, and therefore deſired leave to depart, and to give longer time to the combat; which having obtained, to go immediately to king Alexander, and deſire his advice and aſſiſtance.

Lodowick followed the directions of the princeſs, and obtaining leave of the emperor, he travelled to the court of king Alexander, and acquainted him with the occaſion of his journey. Alexander was very glad to ſee him, and deſirous in all things to adviſe and aſſiſt him, but knew not how. There is no way but this, replied Lodowick, That you return in my behalf, and not being known to be any other than myſelf, to fight the battle for me. Alexander approved of what his friend had propounded; but they were much ſtraitened for time, in regard it was but eight days to the day prefixed for the combat; and if it was delayed but one day, he could not poſſibly arrive time enough; and he had invited all the nobility the next day to come to his wedding.

This was ſuch an obſtacle as could not be removed nor remedied, and put them to their wits end; but king Alexander being reſolved to give an abſolute proof of his friendſhip, and hazard his kingdom, wife, life, and all, rather than his friends ſhould ſuffer in their honour; he thus contrived the buſineſs, that prince Lodowick, in all things reſembling king Alexander, ſhould ſtay there, as if it were he, be married to his queen, and hold all the ſolemnity of the nuptials, but when he was in bed with her, to forbear converſing with her, and that himſelf would immediately go the emperor's court, and undertake the combat, and if he obtained the victory, he would ſuddenly return. This being concluded on, they ſeparated accordingly.

On the next day was ſolemnized the wedding of prince Lodowick and the queen, as if it had been king Alexander; and after much feaſting, at night he went to bed with the queen; but that he might be true to king Alexander, he laid a naked ſword between them, which ſhe much wondered at; however, he continued to do ſo all the time of the abſence of his friend.

King Alexander arriving at the imperial court, immediately applied himſelf to the emperor, telling him, That although his father was very ſick, yet honour obliged him to come at the time perfixed to undertake the appointed combat. The emperor received him kindly, and wiſhed him good ſucceſs; and ſo he went to his lodging as if he had been Lodowick; only the princeſs knowing the difference, who received a private viſit from him, wherein he told her in what manner he left his friend, which much afflicted the

princeſs, who ſtood amazed at this extraordinary inſtance of the friendſhip of king Alexander.

The day of battle being come, both the champions entered the field, and before the combat began, the pretended Lodowick, in the preſence of the emperor, the princeſs, and all the nobility, who were there in ſolemn order aſſembled, made the following declaration.

That if Guido charged him with incontinence, or too much familiarity with the princeſs Florentina, the accuſation was entirely falſe, and that he was guilty of a groſs untruth and ſcandal, to the great diſhonour of himſelf, the princeſs, and of the emperor; and that he was now ready to anſwer him in ſingle combat, if he inſiſted upon his accuſation, and would not retract what he had ſaid. Guido hearing this declaration, anſwered, That what he had ſaid was true, and that he was now ready to prove it by dint of ſword: And thereupon they mounted their horſes, and began the combat with the utmoſt fury; but it laſted not long; for Alexander being the better warrior, ſoon vanquiſhed his enemy, and cutting off his head, preſented it to the princeſs, to her exceeding joy, and the great ſatisfaction of the emperor and all the court, who applauded the valour of king Alexander ſuppoſing him to be Lodowick.

Having thus vindicated the honour of the princeſs, he deſired leave of the emperor ſoon after, to go again, as he pretended, to his ſick father, which being granted, and having taken leave of his imperial majeſty and the princeſs, he departed, and in a ſhort time arrived in his own kingdom, where he was privately, but joyfully received by

prince Lodowick, to whom he gave a full account of the ſucceſs of his journey; Lodowick with great joy, told him that he had ſaved his life, and the princeſs's; and had lain ſuch an obligation upon him for both, that he ſhould not be able to requite, but with his own life, which he would gladly offer up at any time for his ſervice; acquainting him at the ſame time with his behaviour to his queen.

This was the kindneſs between theſe two unparalled friends, whoſe affection to each other exceeded all that was ever written; as in the ſequel of this example will be further made appear.

After many reciprocal aſſurances of conſtancy and affection to one another, theſe two friends ſeparated; Lodowick returning to the emperor's court, and Alexander remaining in his own kingdom; neither was it known by any that he had been abſent.

When night came, king Alexander went to bed to his queen, and ſoon after he lay down, he began to kiſs and embrace her in an affectionate manner; whereupon ſhe told him, That this was a ſudden alteration; as how, ſaid he, becauſe replied ſhe, You have hitherto been very cautious of coming near me, and have put a naked ſword in bed between us, not ſo much as turning towards me; Oh! my dear lady, ſaid he, that was intended for no harm, only for the performance of a vow, which time being expired, I ſhall for the future make you amends.

The queen ſeemed to be contented with this excuſe, but was ſo enraged at his former coldneſs, that ſhe reſolved to be revenged on him; and therefore conſulted with a lord of the court, who

had formerly courted her, they conspired his ruin; and to that end gave him poison, which would certainly have bereaved him of his life, had he not been of a strong constitution; but although he escaped death, yet the poison had such an effect, that it made him a monsterous leper, in such a manner, that he was abominable to behold: and being abhorred by his queen and subjects, they turned him out of the kingdom, and his wife married this lord aforesaid, who reigned king in his stead.

This was the sad condition of the poor unfortunate Alexander; but on the other side, Lodowick was highly advanced, for his father the king of France dying, and the emperor likewise deceasing, he married the princess Florentina, and so became king of France, and emperor of Rome at the same time.

King Alexander understanding the good fortune of his friend, was very joyful, and resolved to go to him and seek relief, in this his time of adversity; and therefore putting on a hermit's apparel, he travelled to the new emperor's court, where being arrived, he would have entered, but was turned out by the courtiers, who could not endure the sight of so deformed a monster; whereupon he spoke with one of the emperor's servants, desiring him for the love of God to do a message for him; the servant being a courteous person, bid him speak what he would have; I desire said the leper, that you would acquaint the emperor that there is a leper, that desires for the love of God, and the sake of king Alexander, that he may be admitted to dine this day in the emperor's presence; the servant said to the leper,

That his requeſt would certainly be refuſed, but however he would fulfil his deſires; and thereupon went and did his meſſage to the emperor, who hearing the name of his dear friend king Alexander, was ſo charmed therewith, that he preſently conſented to the leper's requeſt, commanding that he ſhould eat in the hall at a table by himſelf, and be reſpected as a perſon of honour.

Dinner-time being come, and the emperor and his courtiers being ſet at table, the leper was ſerved in the beſt manner; and when he had eaten he deſired one of the ſervitors to go to the emperor, and deſire him for king Alexander's ſake, to ſend him a bowl of wine. The ſervant did as he was deſired, and the emperor ſent him a bowl of wine; the leper receiving it, drank the wine, and taking the ring, which formerly the emperor had given him, put it into the bowl, and deſired the ſervitor to carry it to the emperor; who ſeeing the ring, and knowing it, was amazed, believing he ſhould hear ſomething of his friend Alexander. He then commanded that the leper ſhould be attended upon, and be conducted to his own private chamber, that he might ſpeak with him.

His commands were inſtantly obeyed; and he ariſing from dinner, went to the leper little imagining that diſmal ſpectacle was king Alexander. Then he aſked him, How he came by that ring? Very honeſtly, replied the leper; I had it of the right owner. Who ſaid the emperor, of king Alexander? No replied the leper, of Lodowick king of France; that cannot be, replied the emperor, for I am that Lodowick, and I gave it to none but my dear friend Alexander; that is confeſſed,

said the leper, and since you call Alexander your dear friend, know that I am that unfortunate king. O what impossibilities do you tell me, says the emperor; nothing but what is too true, replied the king, with tears in his eyes, which by this time flowed likewise from the emperor's, down his cheeks in great abundance.

But having vented his grief, and being fully convinced of the truth of what king Alexander told him, the emperor Lodowick ran to the leperous king, and kissed and embraced him, crying out, O my dear friend! How is it that this great misfortune hath befallen you? You, my lord, replied the king, are the sole occasion of it, though I must confess you are innocent as to any design in it. How! said the emperor, could I your friend, be the cause of this misfortune, and yet be innocent? It is most certain, said Alexander, for your honourable friendship to me, when you bedded with my wife, and laid a naked sword between you (she supposing it to be me) hath so enraged her, that she hath revenged herself on me by poison, which hath wrought the dismal effect which you see, and to complete my misfortune, she hath married one of my subjects, and they have expelled me out of all my dominions; so that your innocency has really, as I said, occasioned my ruin. Oh unfortunate wretch that I am, said the emperor, that I should be the occasion of so much evil, that my dear friend, who hath so often hazarded his life for me, should thus be basely requitted! I cannot, said the king, however complain of you, but of fortune, to whom we must all submit. Well, said the emperor, since you are still master of so much virtue, continue it,

and hope the best, and I will endeavour to procure you a remedy, if it be in the power of human skill to effect it; and nothing in my dominions shall be wanting that may do you service, and revenge you of your enemies: The good king thanked him, and resolved to continue there unknown to all, to see if there might be any remedy found out for his infirmity.

Accordingly the emperor Lodowick sent for all the ablest physicians he could hear of, promising a very large reward to any that could cure his distemper. But when all was done, they told him, it was not within cure of physic; and that if ever he was healed, it must be by a miracle.

This much afflicted the emperor, who, however was not discouraged, but resolved still to try all ways for the restoration of his friend; and finding art and physic of no avail, he applied himself to religious persons for their prayers; neither was he wanting in his own, setting apart several days on this occasion for fasting and prayer.

The good king Alexander bore with patience this great calamity, praying fervently to be delivered, if it might stand with the good pleasure of the Almighty, who in the end was pleased to hear his prayers; and in a vision intimated to him how he might be cured; but it was by so strange a means, that he resolved to continue as he was, rather than to attempt it; for the vision imparted, that there was no other way for his recovery, but to be bathed in the blood of two children of the emperor's, which he had by his beloved empress Florentina, and that the emperor must kill them with his own hands, and afterwards bathe him in their blood.

This was the only remedy prescribed for his malady; but he rather purposed to be silent, accounting it unreasonable to kill two innocents to preserve one sinner: But let him resolve what he pleased, it was the pleasure of heaven to determine otherwise; and as he had given an unparallelled proof of his friendship to the emperor, so the emperor in his turn must retaliate, and indeed exceeded in this great trial upon his natural affection, in preferring his friend before himself, his empress, and innocent children.

But to proceed, the emperor still continued his prayer to God, who in a vision, at length told him, That his friend Alexander knew how to be cured; he thereupon goes to him, and desires him to tell him if he did not know a remedy for his disease.

After much importunity, Alexander told him, That he did, and declared the manner how; but withal dissuaded him from executing it; to which the emperor replied, That since heaven had prescribed those conditions as his only remedy, and that he could not be cured otherwise, he would dispute no further, but obey what was commanded.

He thereupon immediately went and cut the throats of the two innocents as they were asleep in bed, and saving the blood, bathed his friend's body therewith; who instantly became as clear, and as fair as ever, to the great joy of them both; the emperor praising God for giving him those children, that had proved the restoration of his friend's health and beauty, and giving him an opportunity to express his gratitude for the signal services he had done him.

Alexander tranſported with amazement and affection, broke forth into expreſſions of joyful gratitude, and ſaid, My dear friend, now I ſee the ſincerity of your friendſhip to me, by this unparallelled inſtance of your affection, which all that ever I have done, or ſhall be able to do in my whole life, will not be ſufficient to requite. But it is no ſmall affliction to me, that your great affection could not be expreſſed, but by ſuch a ſevere trial as this, of ſlaying your two children for my ſake.

The emperor anſwered, My dear Alexander, God may bleſs me with more children, but I can never more expect ſuch a dear friend; and it is but juſt, that you who have ſo often ſaved my life, ſhould have the firſt fruits devoted to ſo good an end as your recovery from ſuch a grievous diſeaſe, which was brought upon you for the ſervices you have done to me.

King Alexander being perfectly recovered, it was agreed between the emperor and him, that he ſhould privately leave the court, and go ſome few miles out of the town, and from thence ſend word of his approach; and that then the emperor and his nobles would meet him, and conduct him to the imperial palace, where he ſhould continue till an army ſhould be raiſed to recover and reinſtate him in his kingdom.

This propoſition pleaſed king Alexander, and was ſoon performed; for a few days after, came a meſſenger to acquaint the emperor of the arrival of king Alexander.

The empreſs hearing this, expreſſed the greateſt joy imaginable, and propoſed, that the emperor and his nobles ſhould go before to meet him,

and she and her ladies and gentlewomen would follow, not knowing as yet of the death of her two children.

Accordingly the emperor and empress, with a royal attendance, rode to meet king Alexander, whom they received with the greatest demonstrations of respect and affection; and with great joy conducted him to their palace.

At supper the empress placed the king betwixt the emperor and herself, and expressed all imaginable tokens of her esteem and gratitude to him; which so well pleased the emperor, that he said, Oh! my dearest Florentina, I am extremely rejoiced that you express so much value and affection for our most faithful friend.

The empress answered, I should be very ungrateful, my lord, to forget the generous service his majesty hath done for us; and how often, at the hazard of his own life, he hath preserved yours, as well as defended both our reputations; by which means your imperial majesty has arrived to the honour and dignity you now enjoy; therefore I should be wanting in the duty and affection I owe to your majesty, if I did not to the utmost of my power shew the value I have for king Alexander.

Then said the emperor, My beloved Florentina, do you not remember that a deformed leper was at my court lately? I do, said the empress, and a most loathsome creature he was indeed. Suppose, replied the emperor, that this leper was our friend king Alexander, and there were no other way to cure him of his leprosy, but by the death of both our children, in whose blood he must be washed, could you for his sake suffer it?

It is a very ſtrange queſtion, anſwered the empreſs; but yet I can from my heart declare, that if I had ten children, I would kill them all with my own hands, rather than our friend king Alexander ſhould continue ſo loathſome a leper; for we might have more children, but never ſuch a friend as he has been.

The emperor hearing this, was reſolved to make full trial of her conſtancy, and told her all that had happened, and that her children were dead. Upon which, notwithſtanding all her courageous ſpeeches, her natural affection ſo prevailed, that ſhe ſunk down in a ſwoon; but remedies being uſed ſhe ſoon recovered, and made great lamentation; but God, who never fails to requite thoſe who truſt in him, was pleaſed to reward the emperor's great faithfulneſs and piety to his friend, with a ſignal miracle; for no ſooner did the attendants of the children hear of their death, but they with great lamentation ran to ſee them; and when they came where they were, and expected to find them dead, they ſaw the contrary; for they were alive, and ſinging ſongs of praiſe and thankſgiving; and about their necks, where they were cut, were circles of gold.

This joyful news was quickly brought to the emperor and empreſs, who was exceeding glad thereat, giving thanks to heaven for this miracle.

Not long after this, the emperor raiſing a great army, went with Alexander into Egypt, and eſtabliſhed him again in the full poſſeſſion of his realm, putting the queen and her lover to a ſhameful death.

And now king Alexander being a ſingle man, and that theſe two friends might be allied by

marriage, as well as affection, the emperor having one only ſiſter, gave her in marriage to the king; and after having with great pomp and manificence celebrated their nuptials, then he took his leave, and ſet out for the chief ſeat of his reſidence, where he arrived to the great joy of his beloved Florentina.

King Alexander being thus ſettled in peace, ſent a meſſenger to his father, who had caſt him into the ſea, to let him know, That the king of Egypt, upon ſuch a day, would be with him, to view thoſe parts of the country for his diverſion. His father and mother, who all this time believed their ſon to be drowned long ago, received the meſſenger with great honour, and diſmiſſed him with great preſents, ordering him to tell the king, that their ſervices ſhould always be devoted to his majeſty's pleaſure; but they wondered with themſelves, why ſo great a king ſhould vouchſafe them the honour of a viſit in thoſe parts.

The meſſenger returning, told the king, who immediately ſet forward with divers of his nobles; where being arrived, his father and mother fell upon their knees, and with great reverence welcomed them; but he preſently took them up, and kiſſed them very affectionately, and they ſaid, My lord, you do us an honour with your noble preſence, which we ſhall never be able to requite.

When dinner was ready, the father came in with a baſon, and the mother with a towel, ſaying, My lord dinner is ready, will you be pleaſed to waſh? When the king ſaw this he ſmiled to himſelf, and thought of the ſong of the nightingale; but he would not ſuffer them to do any ſuch ſervice, ſaying, Your age is to be honoured;

and calling a ſervant, he made him do the office; and then ſat down to dinner, placing his father at the right-hand, and his mother at his left.

After dinner, the king withdrew into a private chamber with his father and mother, and ſitting down, demanded, If they had any children? They anſwered, No; the king aſked, If ever they had any? They replied, We had one ſon, but he is dead long ago; the king aſked, Of what diſtemper he died? The father then deſired to know, Why his majeſty enquired ſo earneſtly after his ſon? the king anſwered, I have a reaſon for it, and therefore deſire to know of what death he died.

When he heard that he was very much ſurprized, and being touched with remorſe, fell down upon his knees, and deſired his majeſty's pardon, and he would divulge the whole truth. The king would not ſuffer him to kneel, but bid him ſtand up, and not be afraid, but tell the truth and he ſhould be pardoned; for I perceive, ſaid the king, That you have put him to death. Then ſays the father, Mighty prince, we had a ſon that was both wiſe and learned; and upon a time as we ſat at table, there came a nightingale and perched upon a tree near the window, and ſung very melodiouſly, whoſe ſong our ſon began to interpret, ſaying, That the bird intimated that he ſhould be a king, and that I and his mother ſhould hold a baſon of water and a towel to waſh and wipe his hands, which ſo vexed me, that I took him and threw him into the ſea; the king anſwered, What harm would it have been to you, if he had arrived to that grandeur? No harm, my lord, ſays the father; and it has been the cauſe of great uneaſineſs of mind and trouble to me,

that I ſhould be guilty of ſuch a raſh and wicked action.

You may well call it a raſh and wicked action, ſaid the king, to act ſo cruelly againſt the dictates of reaſon, the duty of a parent, and the law of God; and now I will tell you the truth. I am your ſon that you caſt into the ſea; but God hath graciouſly ſaved me, and by his providence brought me to this eſtate and dignity.

The father and mother hearing this, and amazed; with fear and joy, fell down at his feet; but he affectionately took them up, ſaying, Fear not, for my exaltation ſhall be to your glory and advantage. And then he embraced them with great joy, and ſoon after took them with him into his kingdom, where they lived magnificently, and ended their days with comfort.

Prince Diocleſian having thus ended his example, with the acclamation of all preſent, he proceeded to make the following ſhort obſervation, by way of

MORAL.

'By this example we may conclude, that whatſoever hath been once ordained and eſtabliſhed above, nothing here below can obſtruct or hinder.'

And then addreſſing himſelf to the emperor, he ſaid, Moſt honoured lord and father, although God hath endued me with a competent ſhare of wiſdom and underſtanding, it ſhall not impair your honour and glory, but be wholly employed for the preſervation and maintenance of the ſame, as king Alexander's exaltation tended to pro-

the glory, honour, and proſperity of his father, as I have plainly ſhewn; he being honoured with the love of all people, and all the pleaſures the world could afford during this life.

The emperor having retained all that his ſon had ſaid, and how every thing had paſſed, bethought him of his dream, and underſtanding the truth of the viſion, that had the night before appeared to him, was fully ſatisfied of the innocency of Diocleſian, and embracing him, ſaid, My beloved ſon, I will wholly reſign all my empire unto your government; for with the utmoſt ſatisfaction I perceive that you are highly worthy of ſo great a truſt; and it is now proper for me, who am advanced in years to quit all affairs, and give myſelf the pleaſure of a peaceful retirement from the diſtraction of human life.

Diocleſian anſwered, You ſhall, my lord, enjoy the eaſe and ſatisfaction you deſire, but yet retain your imperial authority and grandeur, without the trouble of it, which according to my duty, I will take upon myſelf, continually ſtudying to make your majeſty's reign equally glorious and happy.

HISTORY XXIV.

How the Empreſs and the adulterer were both ſentenced and put to death.

PRINCE Diocleſian then demanded ſentence upon the empreſs and her favorite, who were both preſent, the latter dreſſed in his female habit, and ſaid, Moſt gracious lord, I humbly requeſt you to give judgment againſt the adulterous em-

preſs, as you are obliged to do juſtice to all your good ſubjects.

Firſt, Becauſe ſhe hath endeavoured to commit inceſt with me.

Secondly, For the wicked and unjuſt accuſations ſhe hath unjuſtly laid to my charge.

Thirdly, Becauſe ſhe hath proſtituted her own body, and defiled your majeſty's bed, with an infamous wretch in woman's habit.

For all ſuch crimes ſhe hath certainly incurred the moſt ſevere puniſhments that the law can inflict, and therefore I now demand the ſame, in the utmoſt rigour thereof, that it may be for ever an example to poſterity, to deter every one from ſuch wicked actions and falſe accuſations; and that it may be an encouragement to all good men, by ſhewing, That God never forſakes the innocent, nor ſuffers the wicked long to triumph over them that truſt in him; and that though they may ſeem a while to ſuffer, through malice and perſecution, yet God never fails to turn the malice of their enemies to their own confuſion.

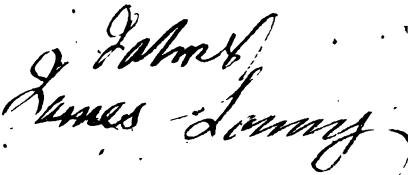
The empreſs hearing this, threw herſelf at the emperor's feet, and implored forgiveneſs, but in vain; for Diocleſian inſiſting upon his demand of juſtice, the judges after mature deliberation, gave the following ſentence, *viz.*

"The wickedneſs, adultery, and perfidiouſneſs of the empreſs viſibly condemn her, and therefore we give ſentence, That ſhe ſhall be drawn through the principal ſtreets of the city upon a ſledge, and then be burnt to death: We alſo adjudge and ſentence, That the infamous adulterer ſhall be cut in pieces, and his fleſh given to the dogs, and the fowls of the air."

This sentence was approved and applaud
the people and the emperor, and accordingly
in execution.

Some years after, the emperor died, leavin
crown and dignity to his son Diocleſian,
made his masters his chief counſellors, and
their advice governed the empire with great
dom and glory, inſomuch that he excelled all
predeceſſors in riches, honour and juſtice;
after a long ſeries of happineſs, in a good old
he ended his days in joy and tranquillity, to
praiſe and glory of Almighty God.

F I N I S.



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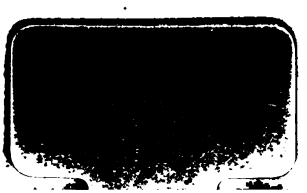
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